THE

Chriſtian Oratory:

OR, THE

DEVOTION

OF THE

CLOSET

DISPLAY'D.

By *BENJAMIN BENNET.*

The SECOND EDITION.

And it came to paſs in thoſe Days that he went out into a Mountain to pray, and continued in the Oratory *of GOD.* Luke. vi. 12.

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THE

PREFACE.

Having ſo far exceeded all due Bounds in this Work, I ſhall not add to the Fault by a large Preface. The Head of Meditation, particularly, is drawn out ſo long, as will ſcarce admit of an Apology; and 'tis probable, this is not the only Thing the Critick will cenſure in it: However, the various Subjects treated of, may be entertaining to ſome, and what is ſaid upon them, may paſs, at leaſt, as practical Diſcourſes, I hope not wholly without Inſtruction, if not as Specimens proper to my Purpoſe. And if the Reader think fit to paſs over the ſeveral Specimens in peruſing the Book (only turning to them as

he has Occaſion, and for his Aſſiſtance, if he attempt any Thing in the ſame way) he will have the Diſcourſe in a cloſer Connection, and the whole Deſign in a clearer View.

I reckon it to little Purpoſe to acquaint the Reader with the Occaſion and Motives of this Undertaking, to profeſs my own good Deſigns, beſpeak his Candour and Acceptance. It would argue Stupidity not to be concern'd about Succeſs; but I know not that this would be a Means of ſecuring it; that Affair ought to be left in an higher Hand. Indeed Mens Taſtes are ſo different, and as much in Matters of Devotion as any Thing elſe, that I can't expect what is here offer'd will pleaſe every Body. If it be acceptable and uſeful to a few; ingage them in more ſolemn Devotion in their Oratories, than they have hitherto attended; promote their Acquaintance with God and themſelves and Fitneſs for Heaven, I ſhall not think my Labour loſt.

I am ſenſible we have great Plenty of Books of Devotion, and many of them truly valuable; and I am far from thinking that he who adds to the Number, muſt ſo much as pretend to excell all that have gone before him; I am ſure I

make

make no ſuch Pretence. But different Genius's, Capacities and Turns of Mind ought to be accommodated. The great Variety there is in the Works both of Nature and Art, is an Argument of the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of Providence, thereby ſupplying the Inclinations and Occaſions of all Sorts. Some may think the Method of Devotion here preſcribed impertinent or impracticable, calculated for a Kind of Utopian *Religion; to others it may be more acceptable and profitable; and in a Matter of ſuch high Importance as Religion and Devotion, any little Improvement is well worth endeavouring.*

What I have chiefly propoſed to myſelf, is to enlarge the Method of Devotion; to carry it through more Particulars than is uſual; and accordingly I have chiefly inſiſted upon thoſe Branches of Devotion that are leſs known, and are generally omitted in Books of Devotion; as the Manner of reading Scriptures, as a Part of Worſhip; Meditation, ſtated and occaſional; Pſalmody, &c. *aiming to furniſh the Chriſtian with a more complete Plan and Scheme of Cloſet Religion. And whatever Defects ſome may find, and others make in the Performance, I am ſatisfied I can't be ſaid* actum agere, *to do what has been often*

en done before, and build on others Foundations.

As I have touch'd a great Number of Subjects, and ſpoke with Freedom on ſome of them, no doubt ſeveral Things will occur, not ſuited to every one's Guſt, and that may offend Men of narrow, rigid Principles, the Slaves of their reſpective Hypotheſes: *But methinks it would be a reaſonable Requeſt to ſuch Perſons, would they hear any but themſelves, and look upon any Face with Temper that wants their Complexion, that they would not caſt away the good with the bad, and for the Sake of a few obnoxious Paſſages, that happen not to agree with their Sentiments, to condemn the whole Treatiſe, and refuſe the Aſſiſtance it might afford them, in Things they themſelves allow.*

Beſides, the Exceptions that may be taken to particular, incidental Paſſages by the Opinionative, I expect the whole will be diſtaſtful to ſome; ſuch I mean, who notwithſtanding they keep a Sort of a diſtant Station in the Chriſtian Church, yet are ſo far from the true Spirit of Chriſtianity, that they are at Enmity with its Principles, Rules and Practice, looking upon every Thing that is ſerious as a Sort of Enthuſiaſm and Cant. But theſe are

not the Perſons to whom I am addreſſing; nor can I invite them hither, having no Entertainment for them. They have too fine a Taſte even to reliſh the Bible, and too much Wit, as they think, to learn of infinite Wiſdom; and 'tis eaſy to foreſee what Cenſure they will paſs, out of their Chair, *upon ſuch Books as theſe.*

The Nature of this Work manifeſtly points out the Perſons for whoſe Service it's intended, viz. Chriſtians; *and theſe not in Name only, that take up with a Form of Godlineſs, denying the Power: Nor Chriſtians of the loweſt Form, of a* Laodicean *Spirit, that have ſcarce Zeal enough to carry them daily into their Oratories; and with them the Things that remain are ready to die: But* true *Chriſtians, and Chriſtians of ſome Attainments and Warmth in Religion, that are under the Influence and Authority of it; that believe and live for Eternity, and think nothing of Importance that terminates in the preſent World; that are labouring, whether preſent or abſent, to be accepted of God; whom no State of Things much moves, ſo they may finiſh their Courſe with Joy; that are ſo far from making a Jeſt of Communion and Intercourſe with God, that they attend the Thing as their chief Solace and higheſt Enjoyment, triumphing therein more than in all Riches, and the peculiar Treaſure*

ſure of Kings and Provinces. Theſe *are the Perſons to whoſe Service the following Eſſay is devoted, and with whom chiefly I expect any good Reception; and with them I leave it, waiting for the Bleſſing of Heaven, to which I recommend it and them.*

5 DE60

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5 DEC60

THE INTRODUCTION.

The Subject of the Diſcourſe propoſed and explained. Of the Jewiſh Proſeuchæ, *or Prayer-Houſes; whether diſtinct from Synagogues. How Chriſt was employed in the Prayer-Houſe, where he continued all night* (viz.) *in Prayer, Meditation,* &c. *What Occaſion he had for ſuch Exerciſes.*

IT will be granted by all ſenſible experienc'd Chriſtians, that there's nothing tends more to preſerve Religion in its Life and Vigour, than a ſteady and regular Diſcharge of the Duties of the Cloſet. *Apoſtacy,* ſays a pious and excellent Divine, *begins at the Cloſet-Door*; for which reaſon I have determin'd to conſider the Subject of Cloſet-Religion, diſtinctly and at large; that I may afford you the beſt Aſſiſtance I can in ſo important an Affair. I ſhall

ground my Diſcourſe on that Text, *Luke* vi. 12. *And it came to paſs in thoſe days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.*

In the beginning of this Chapter, you find our bleſſed Lord vindicating firſt his Diſciples, and then himſelf, againſt the Cavils of the *Phariſees*; who it ſeems accuſed both him and them, as Profaners of the Sabbath: *Why do ye*, ſay they, *that which is not lawful on the Sabbath-day?* ver. 2. and again ver. 7. *The Phariſees watched him whether he would heal on the Sabbath-day.* They thought *Chriſt* and his *Apoſtles* not ſtrict enough in their regard to the external reſt of the Sabbath, taking a greater liberty than *Moſes*'s Law, or at leaſt, than their own Laws and Canons allowed. Chriſt firſt anſwers and ſilences his Accuſers, and then proceeds in the work of his Office. In the 13th Verſe he chuſeth and ſendeth forth his twelve *Apoſtles*, and the Text tells you with what Solemnity he addreſſed himſelf to that Work, introducing it by a Night's extraordinary Devotion; *He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.* Where obſerve

1ſt. The place he retired to, *a Mountain*, and more particularly an *Oratory*, or Houſe of Prayer. He continued all Night ἐν τῇ προσευχῇ τοῦ Θεοῦ. We render it *in Prayer to God*; but if we take the word προσευχῇ for Prayer, it will be literally thus. He continued all Night *in Prayer of God*; which, as it is not Senſe in *Engliſh*, ſo the [a] Criticks will ſcarce allow, I preſume, that the *Greek* admits of the other Tranſlation, *Prayer to God:*

[a] *Beza* renders it *pernoctaret illic orans Deum*; but acknowledges he is forced to depart from the *Greek, ut planius loqueretur.*

And therefore ſome have thought that the *Proſeucha* does not ſignify the Duty, but the Place of Prayer, *viz.* an *Oratory*. And that thus it ſignifies in our Text, Dr. *Whitby* infers from the uſe of parallel Phraſes: "As the Mountain of "God, ſays he, the Bread of God, the Lamp of "God, the Altar of God, the Sacrifice and Table "of God, *&c.* are all Things conſecrated and ap-"pointed to the Service of God; ſo προσευχὴ τοῦ "Θεοῦ muſt in all reaſon be a Houſe of Prayer to "God." He adds, "So the word is certain-"ly uſed, *Acts* xvi. 13. and by *Philo* in his Ora-"tion againſt *Flaccus*, where he complains that "their αἱ προσευχαὶ were pull'd down, and that "there was no Place left, in which they might "worſhip God, or pray for *Cæſar*.

That the *Jews* had *Proſeuchæ*, or Houſes of Prayer, diſtinct from Synagogues, and before there were any Synagogues among them, ſeveral learned Men have endeavoured to prove, particularly Mr. *Joſeph Mede*, and lately Dr. *Prideaux*, &c. Of this Nature they ſuppoſe the Sanctuary of the Lord to be, mentioned *Joſh.* xxiv. 26. and the Synagogues *Pſal.* lxxiv. 8. *They have burnt up all the Synagogues of God in the land*, i. e. all the Places of religious Aſſemblies (Col. Moadhe El.) underſtanding thereby the *Proſeuchæ* or Prayer-Houſes; there being no Synagogues, ſtrictly ſo call'd, as is generally ſuppos'd, 'till after the *Babyloniſh* Captivity.

Dr. *Prideaux* gives this brief Account of theſe Prayer-Houſes.

[b] The chief Place, ſays he, where the *Iſraelites* aſſembled for the Worſhip of God, was the Temple *Connect.* Part I. p. 357.

[b] What this Author and others have ſaid about the *Proſeuchæ*, being moſtly borrowed from Mr. *Mede*, I ſhall give the

ple at *Jeruſalem*, and, before the Temple was built, the Tabernacle, in both of which there was an open Court before the Altar, in which the People met to offer up their Prayers to God; but thoſe that

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Reader ſome of his Thoughts on the Subject, in his *Diatribe* on *Joſh.* xxiv. 26. *And Joſhua took a great ſtone, and ſet it up there (in Shechem) under the oak, which was in the ſanctuary of the Lord*; where he contends, the Sanctuary of the Lord is not the Tabernacle, but one of theſe Prayer-Houſes, which the *Iſraelites* (thoſe of *Ephraim*) had erected in that very place, where God firſt appeared to *Abraham*, and where he built his firſt Altar after he came into the Land of *Canaan*. The *Jews* had but one Altar and Place of Sacrifice (that which the Lord ſhould chuſe to place the Ark of his Covenant there) yet they had other Places for Devotion and religious Uſe; and that this Sanctuary at *Shechem* was not a Place of Sacrifice but Prayer, he endeavours to prove from theſe Reaſons.

Firſt, Becauſe it is incredible that the *Iſraelites*, having but one Tabernacle or Temple for the whole Nation, at which the Males only were bound to appear but thrice a Year, ſhould have no other Place of Prayer nearer their Dwellings; the Tabernacle or Temple being at leaſt an hundred Miles diſtant from ſome of 'em: (He means Places of publick Prayer, for in ſecret, no queſtion, they might pray where they pleas'd.)

Secondly, It could not be the Tabernacle, which was then at *Shiloh*, and not at *Shechem*, and yet muſt have ſome fix'd Place, becauſe the Situation of the Oak is deſign'd by it.

Thirdly, It could not be the Tabernacle, becauſe it was forbid expreſly in the Law, *Deut.* xvi. 21. to plant a Grove of any Trees near to the Altar of God, or to ſet a Pillar; whereas here are both, an Oak, or *Quercetum*, in or by the Sanctuary of God, and a Pillar or Sanctuary erected under it. Therefore

Fourthly, He concludes this Place muſt be a *Proſeucha*, becauſe of the Circumſtance of Trees growing in it, unlawful in the Tabernacle, but a characteriſtical Note of a *Proſeucha*, which ſeems to have been ordinarily beſet with them. He obſerves that *Juvenal* mentions this *Proſeucha* or Prayer-Houſe among the *Jews*.

Satyr. 3. *Æde ubi conſiſtas, in qua te quæro Proſeucha.*

that liv'd at a Diſtance from the Tabernacle, and afterwards from the Temple, built Courts like thoſe at the Temple and Tabernacle, and there offered their Prayers, which, adds he, in After-times we

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and thinks he finds it twice in the New Teſtament; in our Text, and *Acts* xvi. 13. where it is ſaid, being come to *Philippi* in *Macedonia*, on the Sabbath-day, they went out of the City to a River-ſide οὗ ἐνομίζετο προσευχὴ εἶναι we render it, *where Prayer was wont to be made*; but other Verſions, as the *Syriac* and *Arabic*, becauſe there was an Houſe of Prayer, ὃ ἐνομίζετο where it was, ſam'd or reported there was a *Proſeucha* or Prayer-Houſe; and therefore the Apoſtle, expecting an Aſſembly, reſorts thither to teach. The Form of the *Proſeucha*, and its Difference from Synagogues, he repreſents thus. The *Proſeucha* was a Plot of Ground encompaſs'd with a Wall, or ſome other like Mound or Incloſure, and open above much like to our Courts: The Uſe properly for Prayer, as the Name imports. A Synagogue was *Ædificium tectum*, like our Houſes or Churches, where the Law and Prophets were read, *Acts* xv. 21. Synagogues were in the Cities, as the *Proſeucha's* were without in the Fields, a ſort of disjoin'd Courts to the Temple, whither the People turned themſelves when here they prayed. Dr. *Prideaux* thinks, they were not only *without* the City, but moſtly *in high Places*; that which our Saviour prayed in being on a Mountain. He adds, In Synagogues the Prayers were offered up in publick Forms, in common for the whole Congregation, but in the *Proſeuchæ* they prayed as in the Temple, every one apart for himſelf, and ſo our Saviour prayed in the *Proſeucha* he went into. But after all, the Proof is not ſo ſtrong in favour of this Notion, but it yet remains a Queſtion with ſome, whether there were *Proſeuchæ's* diſtinct from Synagogues. Dr. *Prideaux* grants, that in our Saviour's time Synagogues were called *Proſeuchæ*; and for that famous Text, *Joſh.* xxiv. which Mr. *Mede* lays ſo much Streſs upon, the learned Biſhop *Patrick* will not allow his Reaſoning upon it; but thinks it likely that *Joſhua*, who was the ſupreme Governor of God's People, being old and infirm, caus'd the Ark at this time to be brought to *Shechem*, being near to him: And whereas Mr. *Mede* urges the Prohibition, *Deut.* xvi. 21, 22. of planting Trees near God's Altar: He anſwers, this does not make it unlawful to

we find call'd by the name of *Proſeucha* or Prayer-Houſes. He takes notice wherein they differed from Synagogues, particularly in the Uſes they ſerv'd for, in their Form, as alſo their Situation; Synagogues being within Cities or Towns, whereas theſe Oratories were without, and moſtly in high Places. Hence 'tis ſaid in the Text, *Our Saviour went up into a mountain to pray*, and continued in an Oratory, *viz.* there erected.

2dly, The Work *he retired for*, he went into a Mountain *to pray*; not that it's neceſſary to ſuppoſe he confin'd himſelf to the Duty of Prayer. He was entred upon his publick Miniſtry, had ſufficient Experience of the Malice of his Enemies, a full Proſpect of the Oppoſition he muſt ſtill expect from the World: He was ſending forth his Diſciples to preach his Doctrine, and foreſaw the

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ſet up the Sanctuary under a Tree, that had been planted before, eſpecially when it was done only for a ſhort time, and not to make it the Place of its conſtant Abode. But I have gone too far, it may be, in theſe Speculations, which will be thought foreign to the Deſign of a Practical Diſcourſe; however, what has been ſaid may not be unacceptable to ſome, and by putting it into the Margin, I have thrown it out of the Way of thoſe, who think themſelves unconcern'd with ſuch Matters. Whether the *Proſeucha* in the Text was a Synagogue, or a Houſe of Devotion diſtinct from it, is of little Importance: It is enough for my Purpoſe, if it ſignify *a Place of Prayer*, (and thus I have taken the liberty to underſtand it) which our Lord had Recourſe to, not from any Opinion of its Sanctity or Holineſs, but purely for its Conveniency, it being, as was ſaid, near to him, and a Place of Secrecy and Retirement. At other times we find him praying in a (Common) ſolitary Place, *Mark* i. 35. and in a Wilderneſs, *Luke* v. 16. Nor can it be pretended that theſe *Proſeuchæ*, or Oratories, were *holy* in the ſame Senſe as the Tabernacle and Temple were, being never ſanctified by the *Shechinah*, or glorious Manifeſtation of God.

Difficul-

Difficulties they were to ſtruggle with. Now 'tis probable, that when he retired, it was not merely for Prayer, but for Reflection, Meditation, and other religious Exerciſes. He would, no queſtion, on theſe Occaſions, when he made ſuch ſolemn Pauſes, look back on what was paſt, and forward to what was yet to come; to the remaining Stages of his Life, and to the awful concluding Tragedy of it; thereby confirming his Reſolutions, and refreſhing his Mind with ſuch Conſiderations as were proper for that Purpoſe. There was *a Joy ſet before him*, Heb. xii. 2. the Contemplation of which help'd him to endure the Croſs, and deſpiſe the Shame; and 'tis like, on theſe Occaſions, he would *ſet it before himſelf* with all ſuitable Advantage.

If it be ſaid, that this Text, and other parallel Scriptures ſpeak only of his retiring to pray: I anſwer, that might be the *chief thing* he retired for, and therefore only mentioned, tho' other Work be not excluded. It's ſaid of *Peter*, that he went up to the Houſe-top at the third Hour *to pray*, *Acts* x. 9. but one can ſcarce imagine, conſidering how much Zeal the *Jews* had for their Law, and that the Spirit of God has left it, as the diſtinguiſhing Character of the pious and devout amongſt them, *Pſal.* i. 2. *That they meditate therein day and night*, that ſuch a Perſon as *Peter* ſhould employ no time in Reading, Meditation, and the like, at the ſtated Seaſons of his Devotion. So that the whole Duty perform'd on theſe Occaſions, ſeems expreſs'd by the more conſiderable and conſtant Branch of it; and in the ſame Latitude we may underſtand what is here ſaid of our Saviour, that he went into a Mountain to pray, *i. e.* to pray, meditate, *&c.*

If any ask, what Occaſion had Chriſt for Prayer, and other Exerciſes of that Kind, ſince *all fulneſs*

neſs dwelt in him, Col. ii. 19. yea *the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily*, Col. ii. 9. ſince he was anointed by the Holy Ghoſt above his Fellows, *Heb.* i. 9. and receiv'd the Spirit without Meaſure, *John* iii. 34. was always holy, harmleſs, perfectly ſo; a Lamb without Spot, never having any diſorderly Paſſion, or Corruption to conflict with; in ſhort, ſince his human Nature was preſerved from all Taint and Defilement, and from every ſinful Infirmity; was united with the Godhead, and fill'd with the Spirit: Whence was it then that we find him ſo often employ'd, like one of us, in Supplication, Prayer, Reflection, *&c.* entring into his Oratory, and continuing all Night there? I anſwer,

1. He might have a ſpecial Regard herein to our Inſtruction, deſigning to leave us an Example that we ſhould follow his Steps; for whatever his own Occaſions were, he knew ours to be ſuch as would require frequent Retirement, and therefore he thought fit to recommend the Duty to us by his own Practice.

2. He might do it as an Act of Homage to God, and an Acknowledgment of his Dependance on his heavenly Father: As Man he was God's Creature, and as Mediator the Father's Servant, ſubordinate, and ſubject to him in all Things. 'Tis granted all Fulneſs dwelt in him, but *it pleaſed the Father* it ſhould be ſo, *Col.* i. 19. He had the Spirit without Meaſure, *but God gave it him*, John iii. 34. The Father ſent him, ſeal'd him, commiſſion'd him, and he himſelf owns that he came down from Heaven to do the Father's Will, *John* vi. 38. Now, on this Account, Prayer, Praiſe, and other Acts of Devotion, were moſt becoming his Condition and Circumſtances, and a proper Means of expreſſing his Dependance, Reſignation to the Father's

Father's Will, and Subjection in the Capacity of a Mediator.

3. Nor can I ſuppoſe but he found need of ſuch Employment as this, *even on his own account*. Not only the *Greek* Fathers, but many others have ſuppos'd that the Divinity of Chriſt was *quieſcent* (*i. e.* did not exert and ſhew it ſelf) both *during his private Life*, and often *during the whole State of his Humiliation*. He had indeed always neceſſary Supports from the Divinity, and after the Deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt upon him, at his Inauguration, he always had the Spirit with him *in an extraordinary manner*; was never left to any Miſtakes, nor under any Inabilities, as was the Caſe ſometimes of all other Prophets, even the greateſt of them; and yet it is evident the human Nature was left to feel the Difficulties of his Work; to bear, not only the common Infirmities of Hunger, Thirſt, Wearineſs, to endure the Contradiction of Sinners, but the fierceſt and moſt malicious Aſſaults of Devils. How ſenſibly does he complain in ſome of his Conflicts, particularly in the Garden? *My ſoul is exceeding ſorrowful, and ſore amazed.* Nay ſo great was his Preſſure, that an Angel from Heaven was ſent to ſtrengthen him. On which Occaſions 'tis ſuppoſed the Divinity *ſuſpended its Influence on purpoſe*, that the Soul as well as Body might taſte of his Sufferings, and drink of the bitter Cup that was appointed him. Mat. xxvi. 32. Mark xiv. 33. Luke xxii. 43.

Now this being the State of things with our bleſſed Lord, it is eaſy to diſcern how ſeaſonable, and even neceſſary, ſuch Employment, as I've mention'd, wou'd be to him. In his Agony the Evangeliſt tells us, he prayed *more earneſtly*, Luke xxii. 44. with more Intenſeneſs and Vigour of Mind; his Burden then lay with greater Weight upon him, and this excited a more than common Importunity. Nor was it only on this extraordi- ἐκτενέστερον.

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nary Occaſion that he prayed, and prayed earneſtly, (tho' now more earneſtly than uſual) but it ſeems to have been his Practice, as the Apoſtle intimates, when he ſays, that in the Days of his Fleſh he offered up Prayers and Supplications, *with ſtrong crying and tears*, Heb. v. 9. *In the days of his fleſh*, *i. e.* throughout his State of Humiliation. He was *a man of ſorrows*, and a Man of Prayer; and indeed being the one, it was neceſſary he ſhould be the other. We may obſerve,

Iſaiah liii. 3.

3. His *Continuance* in the Duty, viz. *all Night*. 'Tis indeed only ſaid, that he continued all Night in the *Proſeucha* or Oratory; but it is implied, that he continued for the Purpoſes I have mentioned, *i. e.* for Prayer, Praiſe, and Contemplation. The Caſe, in ſhort, I take to be this: Our bleſſed Lord having been publickly engaged in the Buſineſs of his Office through the Day; preaching, working Miracles, anſwering the Cavils of his Enemies againſt himſelf, his Doctrine, and Diſciples, he retires at Night, and for his greater Convenience, goes to one of the *Jewiſh* Houſes of Worſhip, that ſtood on an Hill hard by, and there paſs'd the Night in Prayer and other Work, ſolacing himſelf in the Preſence of his heavenly Father. From whence I ſhall take Occaſion to preſs upon you the like Practice. I need only ſuppoſe, that herein Chriſt was our Example, and deſign'd to be ſo, and that what he did infers an Obligation upon us to do the like, which will be afterwards further conſider'd and prov'd; and then this will be allow'd a juſt Deduction from the Words, *viz.*

That the Diſciples and Followers of the Lord Jeſus are oblig'd, after the Example of their great Maſter, to have their times of Retirement from the World, when they are to enter into their Proſeuchæ, *their*

their Oratories or Cloſets, and there converſe with God.

In enlarging upon this Subject I ſhall,

I. Say ſomething concerning the Chriſtian Oratory, or Place of Retirement.

II. I ſhall give an Account of the Work and Buſineſs we have to do when we retire.

III. I ſhall take Notice of the proper times of Retirement.

IV. Shew the Obligations that lye on Chriſtians, after the Example of their Lord and Maſter, to retire and converſe with God in their Oratories.

CHAP.

CHAP. I.

Of the Christian Oratory, or Place of Retirement.

Concerning which, let me observe,

I. THAT we should make Choice of the most secret Place we can. *Partly* to avoid Ostentation, and all Suspicion of it: Hence that of our Saviour, *Matth.* vi. 6. *When thou prayest, enter into thy Closet.* The [a] Word signifies an inward, or retir'd Apartment: Having tax'd the Pride and Vanity of the Scribes and Pharisees in their Prayers, he advises his Disciples to be as private as possible in their Devotions, to enter into the Closet, and having shut to the Door, pray to their Father that sees in secret. We should act in our Retirement with a single Eye to God, and whatsoever we do, do it heartily, *as to the Lord*, and not unto Man. So far as we are influenc'd by the lower Considerations of human Approbation and Applause, so far Religion

[a] Ταμιεῖον, *penetrale*, a Recess, a withdrawn, retired Part of a Place, hence *penetrale Sacrificium*, is that which was wont to be offer'd in *interiore parte sacrarij*; and *Cicero* speaks of *Dij penetrales* in the same Sense, and *Basil* of ταμιεῖον ψυχῆς *intimi recessus Animi.*

is destroy'd, and lost out of our Services. Let us therefore guard ourselves against all carnal Views; a Tincture of Pride and Vain-glory in our secret Devotions, will make them like the dead Fly in the Ointment of the Apothecary, to send forth a stinking Smell.

Partly, as such a Privacy will better suit some Circumstances of our Duty, and be more convenient for the Management of our Work. The Use of the Voice with Prostration, may sometimes be of Advantage. Our Saviour fell on his Face in the Garden, *Luke* xxii. 41. as did *Moses* and *Aaron*, when deprecating the Divine Displeasure, *Numb.* xiv. 5. in which Cases Persons may take a greater Liberty when most withdrawn from the hearing of others.

2. We should endeavour to have our Oratories, or Closets, furnish'd for all the Purposes of Devotion; I mean, with such Books as may be helpful to us in the several Parts of our Duty; as a Bible, a Psalm-Book, a Commentary, and Concordance, with other religious Tracts, both doctrinal and devotional, which, if well chosen, are certainly the chief Ornament of a Christian's Closet, and of greatest Use to him in his Work there.

I would also advise, that you have in your Oratory, the Notes of such Sermons as you hear; which supposes that you take Notes in Publick, or when you come Home, and write down the more remarkable Hints, and useful Passages, in the Sermons of the Day; (which a careful and diligent Hearer, who is concern'd to improve every Sabbath, and every Sermon, will not ordinarily, at least always, omit) Add to these *a Diary* (or the Account you keep of the State of your own Souls.) In your Offices, or Shops, you have the State of your Trade in Journals, Ledgers, and other Books of Account; in

your Oratories you have [b] *ſpiritual Account-Books*, ſeveral Reckonings ſtated and recorded between God and you, which are to be frequently perus'd, and improv'd, in the Courſe of your Cloſet-Religion.

3. Some have thought it ſubſervient to the Ends of Retirement, to have their Oratory, or Place of Devotion, *ſet apart for, and appropriated thereto.* "It "would be a Thing of ſingular Uſe, ſays Dr. *Patrick*, if thoſe that have ſo much Room in their "Houſe, would ſet ſome little Place apart for ho-"ly Duties, and let it be acquainted with no o-"ther Thoughts but of God and their own Souls: "This would be a Means of putting all other Em-"ployments and Thoughts out of Mind, which "would all leave us when we came to that Place "where they were Strangers; none of them would "be ſo bold as to tread in that Place, which is "waſh'd with Tears; they would not draw Breath, "nor live in that Place, where there is no Air, "but Sighs and Prayers; they would never abide "in that Room, where no Inhabitants is, but God; "for we find, if we come to any Place, where "ſomething of Concernment has been done by us, "the very Sight of the Place revives the Image "of the Thing; if therefore we had a Place of "Privacy, where we did nothing but read, and "pray, and invite God into our Company, as "ſoon as we did but look into it, the Face of God "would meet us, and we ſhould be ſtruck with a "certain Awe and Reverence from his Preſence, "that uſes to be there with us: But if a Man "pray in his Shop, or Counting-Houſe, the

[b] Concerning the Manner and Uſe of ſuch Diaries, more will be ſaid afterward, if I conſider the extraordinary Work of Retirement.

"Thoughts

" Thoughts of Money will be apt to meet him, " his Bills and Bonds will thruſt themſelves into " his Mind, *&c.*"

But as this can't be expected from the main Body of Chriſtians, (that they ſhould be ſo well accommodated I mean) ſo it is not of that Importance, as to require any great Solicitude about it. The ſame Place may, no doubt, ſerve for ſacred and common Work, at diſtant Intervals, and different Times, provided we attend both with due Watchfulneſs, and with a ſuitable Temper of Mind: If the Heart be in frame, the Chriſtian may be devout and ſerious in any Place that is tolerably convenient: However, I ſhall not take upon me to deny what this grave Author and others may aſſert from their own Experience: Some probably may find it a Sort of a natural Help to their Devotion, to have their little Oratory reſerv'd, as a Place of ſolemn Interview with God; never ſuffering any worldly Affairs to intrude into it. No doubt but *Jacob's* Sight of his Pillar would excite his Devotion, and give a Solemnity to the Frame of his Mind, when he recollected what paſs'd between God and him there: But in this I leave every one to their own Liberty; I would only ſay, that as the Work I am about to recommend to you, is of the greateſt Importance of any in the World; ſo you ſhould endeavour to be provided for it, in the beſt Manner your Circumſtances will allow: A convenient Apartment, and ſuitable Supplies of good Books are very deſirable, and methinks I would rather chuſe to want the Ornament of a few Pictures, and a Cupboard of Plate or *China*, than theſe Helps for my Soul.

Geneſis xxviii. 18.

4. I add, ſuch as cannot attain to theſe beſt Accommodations, muſt not however neglect the Duties of the Cloſet, but perform them as well

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as they can, under all their Diſadvantages. You have, it may be, no Choice of Apartments, which is the Caſe of thoſe Families that have but one Room for all Purpoſes; yet ſomething of Cloſet-Religion is expected from them, and ſhould be perform'd notwithſtanding. A Curtain may ſerve to make a Sort of an Oratory, or the reſt may withdraw and leave the Room to one, which may be done *in Turns*; and ſometimes you may chuſe *Iſaac*'s Oratory, which was the open Field, *Gen.* xxiv. 63. *he went out* to meditate, or pray at the Evening-tide.

CHAP. II. SECT. I.

Of the Work to be done in Retirement. Of reading the Holy Scriptures. Proper Choice to be made of the Scriptures read. The Method to be fix'd by a Calendar. The Scriptures read, to be underſtood, and expounded to our ſelves. Some Examples of ſuch Expoſition.

I Am in the next Place to give an Account of the Work and Buſineſs we have to do when we retire; Our Lord went into an Oratory to pray, *i. e.* to converſe with God and his Father, as I have explain'd it; and this is to be our Employment in our Cloſets. I ſhall conſider it both

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as ordinary and ſtated, and extraordinary and occaſional: The latter I may afterwards ſpeak to in a diſtinct Diſcourſe, and ſhall at preſent confine my ſelf to the *ſtated and ordinary Work* of Retirement.

1. One Part of the Duty of the Cloſet is *a devout reading of the holy Scriptures.* Some have thought that the *Jewiſh Proſeuchæ*, or Oratories, were appropriated to Prayer, and that they did not uſe to read the Law in them; which they make one Difference between the *Proſeuchæ*, and Synagogues: But whatever there be in this, 'tis certain the Chriſtian Oratories will admit of this Exerciſe; we are *there* to converſe with God in his Word, as well as in Prayer. The *Romaniſts* indeed not only deny this to be the Duty of the Laity, but have made it impoſſible to them, whilſt they forbid them the Uſe of the holy Scriptures (having put the Bible it ſelf, tranſlated into the Mother-Tongue, into their *Index Expurgatorius.*) In *Proteſtant* Countries, particularly in *England*, they are more on the Reſerve in this Matter, and will, upon Occaſion, grant their Licence to *certain* Perſons to have the *Bible* in their own Language; which implies, however, that it is not free for all, nor for any, without their Permiſſion, and how few can obtain that Favour is well known. But never was there a more daring Uſurpation of proud and preſumptuous Worms; a more open Affront offered to the great Lawgiver of the Church, or a groſſer Inſtance of Unmercifulneſs to the Souls of Men. It was a juſt Complaint of Archbiſhop *Tillotſon* on this Head, "'Tis a hard Caſe, ſays "he, the Church of *Rome* reduces Men to, who "will neither allow them any Salvation out of "their Church, nor the beſt and moſt effectual "Means of Salvation when in it."

But as I am not at preſent concern'd with theſe Men, I ſhall not ſpend any Time in confuting their Cavils: You know your Right and Liberty in this Reſpect; your Bibles lye open to you; you are not only allow'd, but invited and encourag'd to make diligent conſtant Uſe of them; which is what I wou'd on this Occaſion earneſtly recommend to you. God has wrote unto you the *great things of his Law:* Do not account them as *ſtrange things;* don't neglect them as foreign things, that you have no Intereſt in, or Concern with; but let it be a Part of your daily Cloſet-Religion to peruſe your Bibles; to meditate on the Law of the Lord, and the great things thereof.

And this being a Matter of the utmoſt Conſequence, and what, it may be, the Generality of Chriſtians are as defective in, as in any other Branch of Cloſet-Devotion, I ſhall endeavour your Aſſiſtance in the beſt Manner I can: And ſhall firſt lay before you ſome Directions how to proceed in the Diſcharge of this Duty, and then offer ſome Conſiderations to preſs it upon you. I'll begin with the Directions.

Firſt, Make Choice of proper Parts, and Books of Scripture for your reading. I cannot admit that reading Scripture in a direct Order, beginning at *Geneſis*, and going through the ſeveral Books in Courſe, as they ly in our Bible, is the beſt and moſt profitable Method: Not but that all Scripture is uſeful for the Ends and Purpoſes for which it was wrote, and all to be read and ſtudied; but all is not alike uſeful to any, much leſs alike eaſy to be underſtood, or alike fitted for the Service of the Cloſet. There are many Prophecies, ſeveral of the Levitical Inſtitutions, Genealogies, *&c.* that the main Body of Chriſtians can make but little Improvement of (eſpecially in a way of Worſhip)

and

and I can't think theſe ſhould be read by them, *as often* as other Parts of Scripture, which are better ſuited to their Capacity, and to the Ends of their Retirement; and therefore, I ſay, make *a prudent Choice* of Scripture; ſelect thoſe Parts of the *Bible* that you can beſt underſtand, and beſt improve, and let theſe be the Subject of your more conſtant reading. What particular Books you ſhould chuſe for this Purpoſe, I leave to your ſelves to judge; only would ſuggeſt, that ſome previous Enquiry and Study may be requiſite, to fit ſuch and ſuch Books for the Purpoſe I am ſpeaking of. Suppoſe, for inſtance, you make Choice of the Book of *Geneſis*, *Exodus*, the *Pſalms*, or any other of the Old Teſtament, or any Part of theſe; you ſhould endeavour, by reading Commentators upon them, *&c.* to prepare them for the Oratory. So that there is a twofold reading of Scripture; the one in a way of rational Study and Enquiry, the other in a way of Devotion; and 'tis the former of theſe I am here recommending as a Help to the latter; and according to your Proficiency and Improvement thereby, you will have more or leſs of the Scripture fitted for the Cloſet.

Secondly, Fix the Method of reading, and take care to have your Work cut out before-hand, that you may know what Portion of Scripture you are to apply your ſelves to from time to time; and don't ſatisfy your ſelves to read *any where*, as the Bible opens, without Deſign or Choice. For inſtance, if you intend to go through this or that Book of the Old Teſtament, in your ſtated reading, ſeveral of the Pſalms, and moſt of the Books of the New Teſtament, I would caſt them into a Sort of a *Calendar*; as thus:

MARCH 1. { *Gen.* i. / *Pſalm* i. / *Matt.* i. } Or if three Chapters be too much, take two of them.

MAR. 1. { *Gen.* i. / *Pſal.* i. } MAR. 2. { *Mat.* i. / *Pſal.* ii. } MAR. 3. { *Gen.* ii. / *Pſal.* iii. }

or any other that you appoint for your *Calendar*; and in the ſame Order you may go through the reſt of the Books you have choſen for this Service: By which, you ſee, I would generally have a Pſalm, (a ſelect Pſalm, not always in Courſe) join'd with every other Part of Scripture, in your daily reading, as being exceeding proper to aſſiſt your Devotion. This *Calendar* you may either form for a ſhorter or longer time; for a Year, or a Month, or a Week, as you ſee Cauſe. Only take Care to have a Supply of new Matter for your *Calendar*, before the old is quite exhauſted.

Thirdly, Endeavour to comprehend, as well as you can, the Senſe and Meaning of what you read. It is not the Sound of Words that's Scripture, but the Senſe of them; nor is there any more Devotion in peruſing an *Engliſh* Tranſlation of the Bible than a *Latin* one, when you underſtand both alike, *i. e.* underſtand neither. It was a very proper Queſtion of *Philip* to the Eunuch, when he found him reading his Bible, *Underſtandeſt thou*, ſays he, *what thou readeſt*? Acts viii. 30. We ſhould often put this Queſtion to our ſelves, and never think we are employed, as becomes thoſe that are worſhipping God, and aiming at the Edification of our own Souls, in reading the Scripture, unleſs in ſome Meaſure we underſtand what we read; to which Purpoſe (beſides the previous Stu-

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dy, before advis'd to, which has brought ſuch particular Books into your *Calendar*) you'll find it neceſſary, now and then at leaſt, on this Occaſion alſo, to make Uſe of your Concordance and Commentator. We don't indeed pretend to have any infallible Expoſitions of Scripture, but we have ſeveral good Helps for the better underſtanding it, and ſhould not deſpiſe or neglect them. Which of the numerous Commentators to preſer, I ſhall not take upon me here to direct; but ordinarily, ſuch as are ſhort, and give the literal Senſe in a few Words, with an eaſy and clear Connection, are beſt fitted for your Aſſiſtance in your daily reading.

Fourthly, Expound that Part of Scripture that lies before you, to your ſelves; preach upon it to your own Hearts, and improve it ſo as may beſt anſwer the Purpoſes of Devotion; I mean the Scripture of the Day, as I may call it, and which your *Calendar* now directs you to. There is certainly a Difference between reading the Scripture at other times, when we ſtudy it very much, as we do common Books, with a Deſign chiefly to find out its Meaning, and reading it *as a part of Worſhip*; in which devout Affections are to be exercis'd, and Endeavours us'd to work it upon our Hearts, by a ſuitable and cloſe Application, as the Matter requires.

That I may fully explain my Meaning, and encourage you to the Practice of a Duty of exceeding Moment, as I apprehend this to be, I ſhall give you ſeveral Examples and Specimens of what I intend; ſome more looſe and general, others more exact and methodical. Suppoſe the Section or Portion of Scripture you are to read, be *Gen.* i. *Pſal.* i. 'tis not enough that you read theſe over, and underſtand ſomething of the Meaning of them, and

ſo cloſe the Book without further Thought or Reflection; but you are to expound, as I ſaid, what you have read, and apply it to your own Hearts as well as you can.

As for Example, *Gen.* i. (the Chapter being read) I have here, ſay you, an Account of the Creation of the World in ſix Days; the Particulars, the Order and Manner of the Work; that it was accompliſh'd by the Almighty's *Fiat*; for by the Word of the Lord were the Heavens made, and all the Hoſt of them by the Breath of his Mouth; he ſpake and it was done, he commanded and it ſtood faſt; he only ſaid (I here read) *let there be Light*, and there was Light; *let there be a Firmament*, and there was a Firmament, *&c.* I have alſo an Account of the Formation of Man, how he was diſtinguiſh'd from the reſt of the Creatures, being made upon Conſultation, as it were, and in the Image and Likeneſs of God. The Chapter concludes with God's Review of his Work, and Approbation of it. God ſaw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good; exactly ſuited to anſwer the End of its Creation, and the Deſign of the All-wiſe Creator: And how full a Demonſtration is here of an eternal, neceſſary, infinitely perfect Being? How ſtrong a Proof of the Exiſtence of that God, whom, as a Chriſtian, I am taught to worſhip? How authentick an Hiſtory of the Original of all things; and that with ſuch Clearneſs and Satisfaction, as the Heathen Philoſophy could never attain to? What an Illuſtration is here of the Attributes and Perfections of the Divine Nature? How amazing that Power that ſpoke ſuch a World as this into Being? How admirable the Wiſdom that ſhines forth in the Variety, Harmony, and Order of all things? And oh my Soul! how fit an Object is

this

this glorious Being of thy Fear, thy Love, thy Truſt, Dependence, *&c.*

And having thus glanced at ſome Paſſages in this Chapter, in a more general way, you may proceed to the firſt Pſalm, ſuppos'd alſo a Part of the preſent Portion of Scripture you have before you, which you may conſider a little more fully now, or on another Occaſion.

In this Pſalm (ſay you) I obſerve, 1. The Character of a pious and bleſſed Man, ver. 1. 2. An Account of his Bleſſedneſs, v. 1, 3. 3 This illuſtrated from the oppoſite State of the ungodly, v. 4, 5. 4. The Reaſon of both, v. 6.

1. The Character of the pious and bleſſed Man, and this Negative in three Particulars, v. 1. *He walketh not in the Counſel of the Ungodly, nor ſtandeth in the way of Sinners, nor ſitteth in the Seat of the Scornful*; by which it will be eaſy to apprehend is meant, that in his Principles, Temper, Conduct, and Life he's diſtinguiſh'd from ſuch Perſons: He doth not approve of their Courſe, imitate their Examples, and walk in their Way; their Way of Vanity, Worldineſs, Pride, Profaneneſs, Neglect of God and Religion, *&c.* He may in the Surprize of a Temptation ſtep into the way of Sinners, but he does not *walk* in it, *ſtand* in it; much leſs does he ſeat himſelf in the Chair of the Scorner, inwardly deſpiſing Religion, and making a Jeſt of ſacred things. And then here's the poſitive Character of the bleſſed Man, v. 2. His Delight is in the Law of the Lord, and in his Law does he meditate Day and Night: The holy Scriptures are his Study, his Exerciſe, and conſtant Entertainment. He delights in the Hiſtory of Scripture, as it contains a moſt authentick Account of the great Foundations of Religion; the Creation of the World, the Origin of Man, the Occaſion of his

Apoſtacy, and the glorious Plan of Redemption by the promiſed *Meſſias:* He delights in the Precepts of it, as a moſt exact Rule of Life; in the exceeding great and precious Promiſes of it, a never-failing Spring of the ſtrongeſt Conſolation; and in the whole, as 'tis a Means of ſanctifying the Nature, enriching the Mind, and of pleaſing Intercourſe with Heaven, for ſo he finds it. It follows (and no wonder) *that he meditates therein Day and Night, i. e.* he ſtudies it with Diligence, Conſtancy, and Care.

2. Here's further to be obſerv'd, the Account given of the Bleſſedneſs of ſuch an one, which is aſſerted in general Terms, v. 1. Bleſſed is the Man, or, *O the Bleſſedneſs of that Man,* as I remember I have heard the Original imports; he is certainly, fully, and every way bleſſed; and tho' I don't pretend to underſtand the *Hebrew* Criticiſm, (as muſt be ſuppos'd the Caſe of many whom I would willingly engage in this Exerciſe) yet methinks I can readily cloſe with the Senſe of it; for ſurely none on Earth are happy, ſo happy as the Perſons here deſcrib'd, *They that delight in God, and his Word:* Great Peace have they that love thy Law, and nothing ſhall offend them. After this general Intimation of the good Man's Bleſſedneſs, here's a particular Inſtance, wherein he's bleſſed, v. 3. *He ſhall be like a Tree planted by the Rivers of Water,* which bringeth forth its Fruit in its Seaſon, *&c.* planted by the Rivers of Water, from whence it is ſupplied with ſufficient Moiſture, ſo that it remains always freſh, and is always fruitful; and to ſuch a Tree is the good Man compar'd, who delights in the Law of the Lord, *&c.* And there ſeems two things imply'd in this Similitude, that the main Happineſs of a Chriſtian lies in his being fruitful, ready to every good Work,

and

and abounding therein; and that God's Law, and his Delight therein, has a ſpecial Influence upon his Fruitfulneſs. What a Canal of Water is to the Tree planted on its Bank, that is the holy Scripture to the Believer, he derives refreſhing, fructifying Streams from thence.

And now how eaſy are ſuch Remarks as theſe? 1. That Religion is the only true and ſolid Foundation for Happineſs: Oh the Bleſſedneſs of—— Of whom? Not the rich, the mighty, the noble, as ſuch; but of the Man who walks not in the Counſel of the Ungodly, but delights in God's Law. Bleſſedneſs is annex'd to the Character, not of the great, but good: *The Fear of the Lord is the beginning,* (or chief Point) *of Wiſdom,* Pſal. cxi. 10. 2. 'Tis plain, as there are two different States in the other World, ſo there are two *different ſorts of Perſons* in this World, diſtinguiſh'd by their Counſels, Principles, Tempers, and Ways: What the one are, the other are not. 3. The great Diſtinction of theſe two Sorts of Perſons, is very much founded upon their different Regard to the Divine Law: *The one* neglect it, conducting themſelves by Meaſures and Counſels of their own, and not by thoſe of the divine Law, as is here intimated; their Life is fram'd according to carnal, worldly Maxims, praiſing ſuch as do well for, or to themſelves, *Pſalm* xlix. 18. and bleſſing the Covetous, whom the Lord abhors, *Pſalm* x. 3. their Pride, Ambition, and other Luſts, preſcribe Laws to them. *The other ſort* live by an higher and more divine Rule: God's Law is their Delight, *&c.* 4. Of how much Conſequence is it, to a good Man, rightly to value, ſtudy, and delight in the Word of God? From hence he's diſtinguiſh'd from the Ungodly; from hence his Character, from hence his Bleſſedneſs and Fruitfulneſs. Oh! may

I never forget thy Precepts, for by them thou haſt honoured me, by them thou haſt quickned me.

Fifthly, I obſerve the falſe Notions the World has of Happineſs: Let the Men of this World judge of it, how different will their Sentence be from that which is here pronounc'd by the inſpiring Spirit? The good Man, ſays he, is bleſſed, *for* he ſhall be like a Tree planted by the Rivers of Water, that is conſtantly and ſeaſonably fruitful. Fruitfulneſs is the Chriſtian's Bleſſedneſs; to have an Heart to love and ſerve God, to converſe with him, in his Word, Providences, Ordinances; to bring forth the Fruits of Juſtice, Righteouſneſs, Piety, in all the Branches of it; to be able to abound in the Work of the Lord; to be furniſh'd to every good Word and Work; *this is Bleſſedneſs*, Lord grant me this: I need, I deſire no more!

3. This bleſſed State is illuſtrated by the oppoſite State of the Ungodly: In general *the Ungodly are not ſo*, v. 4. they neither anſwer the Character, nor are intitled to the Happineſs of the pious Man; they delight not in the divine Law, are not like the Tree planted by the Rivers of Water, *&c.* but, *are as the Chaff, which the Wind driveth away*; of little Worth, and no Stability It follows, *wherefore the Ungodly ſhall not ſtand in the Judgment, nor Sinners in the Congregation of the Righteous*; i. e. they ſhall be caſt and condemn'd in the great Day of the Lord, and not admitted into the general Aſſembly, and Church of the firſt-born.

4. The Pſalm concludes with the Reaſon of both, *viz.* the Happineſs of the one, and the Miſery of the other. The *Lord knows*, that is, approves the Way of the Righteous, and therefore, as is imply'd, he is bleſſed; but, as muſt be alſo imply'd, he knows not, approves not the Way of the Ungodly, and therefore, *it ſhall periſh*. And from

hence I obſerve, 1. How worthleſs and vile the Ungodly are: Whatever Names and Titles they are diſtinguiſh'd by, and with whatever Grandeur and Pomp they appear, they are, in God's Account, *as Chaff*, and accordingly repreſented as worthy of Contempt, *Pſalm* xv. 4. 2. What a Change will there be hereafter in the State of things? *The Ungodly ſhall not ſtand in Judgment*, &c. Now we often ſee the Reverſe of this: *In the Place of Judgment, Iniquity is there*; the Saints, the Excellent of the Earth are frequently caſt out, diſhonour'd, deſpis'd; but hereafter the Tables will be turn'd; a glorious Diſtinction ſhall be made in Favour of them: *The Upright ſhall have Dominion in the Morning*. 3. How tranſient and ſhort liv'd is that Deluſion of an Happineſs that ungodly Men glory in? What a Dream is it? They are as Chaff, which the Wind driveth away, and ſhall ſoon be cut down as the Graſs, and wither as the Herb. 4. God is Judge, and 'tis by his Sentence that every one muſt ſtand or fall at laſt; as he knows, and approves our Way, or otherwiſe, ſo will our State be determin'd for ever. And oh! my Soul, learn from hence thy Duty, thy Intereſt, thy Happineſs; what to chuſe, and what to purſue: Guard againſt the Counſel and Way of the Ungodly: If Sinners entice thee, conſent thou not; caſt not in thy Lot amongſt them, but refrain thy Foot from their Path; they are far from Bleſſedneſs, whatever they may imagine: Bleſſed is the Man that walks not with them; their Schemes and Projects, as they are wholly earthly and ſenſual, confin'd within the narrow Bounds of Time, and form'd without Regard to the ſuperior Wiſdom of God, in his Word, will ſhortly come to nothing; don't therefore chuſe with them, or live by their Meaſures. In the mean time, be not diſturb'd at their

Succeſs,

Succeſs, and ſeemingly proſperous State: *Fret not thy ſelf becauſe of evil Doers, neither be thou envious becauſe of the Workers of Iniquity:* They are but as Chaff, and ſhall be burnt up with unquenchable Fire; the Lord approves not their Way, and it ſhall periſh. Lord, teach me thy Statutes; help me to make thy Law my Delight, and to reſt in thy Favour, as my ſupream Happineſs!

For another Specimen of the Method preſcrib'd, let us a little conſider *Matth.* i. alſo mark'd in the Calendar. The Chapter being read, you proceed thus: I find, ſay you, in this Chapter, 1. A Pedigree of Chriſt, or a Catalogue of his Anceſtors, from whence he proceeded. I have often heard of ſome Difficulties in this Genealogy, which the *Jews*, and other Enemies of the Chriſtian Faith, have objected to us; but I thank God they are no Stumbling-Block in my Way. The great Deſign of it, no queſtion, is to aſſure us, that Jeſus Chriſt deſcended from the Families, to which he was promis'd, and from thoſe Fathers, of whom, as concerning the Fleſh, he was to come: And this being highly neceſſary to be known, I find the Evangeliſt, before the Relation of his Conception and Birth, takes Care to clear that Matter, and gives us his Pedigree; as *Luke* does, before he enters upon the Account of his publick Miniſtry. For the better Underſtanding, and Improvement of this more difficult Part of Scripture, let me obſerve, 1. That according to ancient Promiſes and Prophecies, the *Meſſiah* was to be of the Family of *Abraham*, *Gen* xii. 3, 22, 28. The Promiſes were made to *Abraham*, and his Seed, *Gal.* iii. 16. and accordingly he took on him the Seed of *Araham*, *Heb* ii. 16. He was alſo promis'd to *David* frequently, 2 *Sam.* vii. 16. *Pſalm* lxxxix. 4, 29. which imply'd, that of the Fruit of his Body God

God would raiſe up Chriſt, to ſit upon his Throne, *Acts* ii. 30. 2. I obſerve, that he is by the Evangeliſt firſt mention'd, as of the Family of *David*, tho' promis'd long before to *Abraham*. The Reaſon of which ſome have thought to be, that the Promiſe to *David* was later, and moſt in the Mind of the *Jews*, who univerſally expected their *Meſſiah* out of the Houſe of *David*, and as the Son of *David*, Matth. ix 27. xv. 22. 3. I obſerve, that for greater Clearneſs, for help of the Memory, or ſome other Reaſon, the Evangeliſt divides his Account into three remarkable Periods, (three times fourteen Generations) *viz.* from *Abraham* to *David*; from *David* to the Captivity; from the Captivity, to the Birth of Chriſt. The firſt Diviſion, includes the Age of the Patriarchs; the ſecond, that of the Kingdom and Temple, till its Ruin; the third beings at the Captivity, when the Kingdom and Temple were deſtroy'd, and reaches to the *Meſſiah:* The firſt brought the State to Glory, in the Kingdom of *David*; the ſecond, to Miſery, in the Captivity of *Babylon*; and the third, to Glory again, in the Kingdom of Chriſt. 4. Tho' I may not be able to anſwer all Cavils, and remove all Objections, which may be made againſt ſome Particulars in this Genealogy, this need not ſtagger my Faith. The Evangeliſt expreſly aſſerts, that Jeſus Chriſt was the Son of *David*, and *Abraham*; and not only ſo, but proceeds to prove it, in a Table of his Deſcent; which he left to the Peruſal and Judgment of the Age: Nor did I ever hear, that the *Jews* of that time, who were skill'd, to a Nicety, in Matters of this Nature, ever charg'd the Evangeliſt with Miſtakes: So that if there ſhould be found any Names, or other Difficulties, that the unlearn'd, ſuch as my ſelf, cannot account for at this Diſtance, I have not the leaſt Reaſon from

from thence, to conclude againſt the Authority of the Evangeliſt, but muſt rather impute it to the want of thoſe Means of Satisfaction, in theſe Particulars, that the *Jews* then had, but we want. It was neceſſary that the Evangeliſt ſhould prove, that Chriſt was of the Family of *David*, otherwiſe he had better not have attempted any thing of a Pedigree; and 'tis abſurd to think he would expoſe to public View a Table that was liable to Exception: Tho', after all, there are no Difficulties, but what I find learned Men are able to remove. And therefore,

5. I conclude that *Jeſus Chriſt* is really the Son of *Abraham* and of *David*, according to ancient Prophecies, and conſequently that ſo far he anſwers the Character of the promis'd *Meſſiah*. Here then I have a Foundation for my Faith. Had he wanted this Qualification, all the Miracles he wrought would not have entitled him to the Dignity of the *Meſſiahſhip*; but ſince this Point is clear'd, I am the better prepar'd to attend the other Evidences, and peruſe with greater Regard the Hiſtory of him.

I find alſo in this Chapter an Account of the Conception and Birth of Chriſt, from the 18th to the 24th Verſe: Where, 1. I obſerve the Strait *Joſeph* was in: *Joſeph* and *Mary* were eſpouſed, but not married, and before they came together, he apprehends her to be with Child, and, knowing nothing of the Myſtery, concludes ſhe had been unfaithful to him; whereupon he reſolves not to take her to Wife, but diſmiſs her: For being *a juſt Man*, he would not receive into his Boſom a ſuppos'd Adultereſs; but then he reſolves to do it privately, concealing the Eſpouſals, *being a merciful and good Man*, (which ſome ſuppoſe the Senſe of the Word here uſed) and therefore was unwilling to expoſe her to the Rigour of the Law, and the Penalty due to an Adultereſs; Charity ſuggeſting,

δίκαιος.

no

no queſtion, many things in her Favour. 2. The whole Matter is clear'd up to him; for whilſt he was reaſoning with himſelf, and attending the ſeveral Pleas in his own Breaſt (as we may ſuppoſe) of Juſtice to the Demands of the Law, Mercy to the Offender, and Tenderneſs to one he entirely lov'd, the Angel of the Lord, in a Dream, makes known the Myſtery, and aſſures him, *She was with Child of the Holy Ghoſt*, and therefore he need not fear any Diſgrace by owning the Relation. 3. His Birth is foretold, and his Name given him by the ſame Angel, *She ſhall bring forth a Son, and ſhall call his Name Jeſus, for he ſhall ſave his People from their ſins*, v. 21. The Name imports his Office, which was to be a ſpiritual Deliverer, to ſave from Sin; and the ſame was given him by his Parents, at his Circumciſion, it's likely; and, no queſtion, he went by that Name during his private Life (as well as afterwards) *Jeſus* or *Joſhua the Carpenter's Son*. 4. 'Tis remark'd, that thereby an ancient Prophecy was accompliſh'd, v. 22. *All this was done, that it might be fulfill'd, Behold a Virgin ſhall be with Child, and they ſhall call his Name Immanuel*, i. e. he ſhall be Immanuel, God with us, God among Men, as his Works manifeſted him to be. 5. The Chapter concludes with *Joſeph*'s Obedience to the Viſion; he takes her to Wife; yet out of Reverence to ſo extraordinary a Conception, and by ſpecial Providence of God, abſtains from her till ſhe was delivered; and then the holy Infant is named *Jeſus*.

But oh my Soul! what ſhall I ſay to theſe Things? 1. Pauſe a little, and with all humble Devotion contemplate this ſurpriſing Subject: How juſtly does the Prophet ſay his Name ſhall be called *Wonderful!* A Virgin with Child! With Child of the Holy Ghoſt! Let Angels and Men bow the Iſaiah ix. 6.

Head

Deut. iv. 32. Head and adore! *Ask of the Days that are paſt, ſince the Day that God created Man on the Earth, and ask from the one Side of Heaven to the other, whether there hath been any ſuch thing as this great thing is:* No, 'tis *a new thing* created in the Earth: Never was there ſuch a Conception and ſuch a Birth! 2. What great Expectations may we juſtly have from ſo extraordinary a Perſon; and what an admirable Preparation is here for his high Function? Was he to reform a degenerate World, by Teaching and Example? Was he to exhibit a perfect Pattern of Virtue and Religion? Was he to be a publick Victim for the Expiation of Sin? Behold a Miracle in his Conception, ſo far fitting him for all this! 3. What Eſteem and Reverence, *&c.* is due to this wonderful Perſon, conceiv'd by the Holy Ghoſt, and born of a Virgin? O my Soul! read with ſuitable Regard the Hiſtory of his Life; receive with all Submiſſion his Doctrine, and reſign to his Authority. 4. How comfortable the Name he bears, *Jeſus, a Saviour!* 'tis as Ointment poured forth, the moſt grateful Sound in the World to loſt and periſhing Sinners: And methinks there is ſome Aſſurance of the Succeſs of this beneficial Office, in that the Name is given him by an Angel from Heaven, ſent upon this Occaſion, and, no queſtion, with Commiſſion thus to name and characterize the Divine Birth. 5. I obſerve ſome Reſtriction and Limitation in the Salvation Jeſus is Author of: *He ſhall ſave his People from their ſins*; only *the People of the Meſſiah* will be eventually ſaved by him, and who theſe are the royal Prophet intimates, *Pſal.* lxxxix. 30, 32. (*viz.*) ſuch as forſake not his Law, but walk in his Judgment; that are under an holy Reſtorative, reforming Diſcipline, ſuch as believe in him (as their Character is elſewhere expreſs'd) and are ſubject to him: Such as

partake

partake of his Anointing, have the ſame Temper and Complexion that he had, *Rom.* viii. 29. In ſhort ſuch as are a peculiar People, ſanctify'd by his Word and Spirit, and zealous of good Works. συμμόρφους.

And then I obſerve he ſaves them from their Sins, not in them. And now, oh my Soul! with what Satisfaction may I peruſe this Part of Scripture? Behold here the Accompliſhment of many ancient Prophetick Oracles: Surely this is he that was to come, nor will I look for another; this is that Seed in whom all the Families of the Earth were to be bleſſed; *the Seed of the Woman* by way of Diſtinction and Peculiarity; born of a Virgin, by the overſhadowing myſterious Influences of the divine Spirit: And as his Errand was kind, beneficent, ſuitable to my Neceſſities, as he's Jeſus a Saviour, may I ſecure my Part and Intereſt in him; may I be one of his People, may I accept the Salvation he came to beſtow, *viz. A Salvation from Sin:* Oh my Soul! never call him *Jeſus*, if he be not *thy Lord:* he ſaves by his Blood and by his Spirit; as Jeſus he both atoneth and ſanctifieth, nor muſt thou expect the Benefit of his Croſs, if thou diſlikeſt his Scepter.

The ſecond Pſalm will offer it ſelf in your Calendar at the ſame time, as Part of the Scripture next to be read, now or afterward, when you addreſs your ſelf to the like Work. You may proceed in ſome ſuch manner as this. You 1. enquire into the Penman and Occaſion of the Pſalm; which is ordinarily the beſt Key to let us into the underſtanding of it; and tho' we have neither of theſe mention'd in the Inſcription or Title, yet the Apoſtle aſſures us *David* wrote it, *Acts* iv. 25. and it may be your Commentator may ſuggeſt, the Occaſion probably was his peaceful Settlement on the Throne of *Judah* and *Iſrael*, after the Oppoſi-

tion he met with from the *Philiſtines*, *Moabites*, *Syrians*, &c. in reflecting upon which Matter the Spirit of God led him to Expreſſions, fit and deſign'd to repreſent the Eſtabliſhment of the *Meſſiah* in his Kingdom, and his Triumph over all his Enemies. In the beginning of the Pſalm he expoſtulates with, and inſults, as it were, the malicious Oppoſers of his Government. *Why do the Heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?* They ſet themſelves againſt him (the Lord's anointed) which in the ſpiritual Senſe was fulfill'd in his Son the *Meſſiah*, and the ſame Part acted over again by *Herod*, *Pontius Pilate*, and the Rulers of *Iſrael*, Act. iv. 27. From the 4th to the 10th ver. he ſhews the Vanity of their Attempts, as they were oppoſing the Council and Appointment of God, both with reſpect to *David* and the great *Meſſiah*: He that ſat in the Heavens deſpis'd the Malice, and laughed at the weak Efforts of ſuch Worms: Chriſt the *Meſſiah* was, by the Decree of God, to ſit upon the Throne typified by *David*'s, to rule over the Gentile World, with abſolute Authority and irreſiſtible Power. This is the Counſel of God, and it ſhall ſtand; for he ſhall reign till he hath put all his Enemies under his Feet, daſhing them in pieces like a Potter's Veſſel. He concludes the Pſalm with ſuitable Advice, that all wou'd own, and make Obeiſance to this mighty Sovereign. And hence I obſerve, 1. That the Pſalms are not human Compoſures. God ſpake by the Mouth of his Servant *David*, ſays the Apoſtle, *Acts* iv. 25. referring to this very Pſalm: They are Part of that Scripture, which is given by divine [c] Inſpiration, and

[c] The Inſpiration of the Penman of Scripture was, no queſtion, different, according to the different Nature of the Subjects

and accordingly I would peruſe them. 2. The Oppoſition Chriſt met with is what was foretold, and comparing the Prophecy and Hiſtory together, the Prediction and Event, my Faith is the more confirm'd in the *Meſſiah*. 'Tis no Objection to me againſt my Saviour, that the Rulers did not ſo readily believe in him: The Prophecy repreſented that thus it ſhould be, and as the Scripture *muſt* be, ſo here it was fulfilled. 3. 'Tis evident Chriſt's Kingdom ſtands on a Rock, and cannot be ſhaken, *viz.* The Decree and Stipulation of God: He has by Oath made him a royal Prieſt for ever; and tho' the Heathen rage, *'tis in vain*; the Gates of Hell ſhall never prevail againſt his Church: He'll *ſtrike through Kings in the day of his wrath*, Pſal. cx. 4, 5. 4. Be convinc'd then, O my Soul! of thy Duty and thy Intereſt: Be wiſe, be inſtructed in this great and momentous Affair; *kiſs the Son, leſt he be angry*; bow to his Scepter, or thou ſhalt periſh in his Wrath, be broken by his Iron Rod. Lord, enthrone thy ſelf in my Heart, take fuller Poſſeſſion of my Soul; grant me the Inheritance of thoſe that fear thee; *the Bleſſedneſs of thoſe that truſt in thee.*

Subjects they were concerned with. Sometimes the inſpiting Spirit led the Prophet (the Perſon he inſpired) to his Subject, and ſupplied it to him, furniſhing him with the entire Matter, ſaying to him, as the *Alpha* and *Omega* to *John*, what thou ſeeſt write in a Book. At other times, I ſuppoſe, he only ſtruck in with the Meditation, which particular Occaſions might invite to, directing and improving it; So that the Compoſure was at once the Work of the devout Mind, and expreſſive of its preſent Frame, and yet the Inſpiration of the Holy Ghoſt; which I take to be the Caſe, often at leaſt, of *David* and other Pſalmiſts. Rev. i. 11.

SECT. II.

Other Specimens of the Method propos'd, upon Gen. ii. Pſal. iii. Pſal. iv.

LET me offer another Specimen, ſtill in the Courſe of your *Calendar*, which is *Gen.* ii. The Chapter read, I find here, ſay you, (reviewing what was more particularly related in the foregoing Chapter) that the World and all the kinds of Creatures in it, were made in ſix Days, and that to preſerve the Memory of ſo glorious a Work, and give an Opportunity of converſing with the Author, *a Sabbath*, or Day of holy Reſt, is appointed: *God bleſſed the ſeventh Day, and hallowed it*, v. 3. And if infinite Wiſdom ſaw it convenient for innocent Man in Paradiſe, to have a ſtated time of ſolemn Religion, how much more neceſſary is it for him in his preſent deprav'd State, when he is fallen into ſuch a Forgetfulneſs of God, his Duty and Happineſs? O my Soul! be thankful for this Day, own the Authority, Wiſdom, and Goodneſs of GOD in the Appointment of it; *remember to keep it holy*; endeavour to abſtract and withdraw thy Thoughts from earthly things, and enter upon the Life of Heaven, as far as thou canſt on this Day. Let it be as one of the Days of Heaven to thee: Sabbath-Religion was from the Creation; 'tis the good old Way, walk in it, and never be aſham'd of it; the Homage due to the Creator, the Care of thy own Soul demands this of thee.

As in the former Chapter I read of the Creation of Man, and the Dignity conferr'd upon him therein;

therein; ſo in the ſummary Repetition of things in this Chapter, the Matter is reſum'd, and further explain'd, v. 7. *And the Lord God formed Man of the Duſt of the Ground, and breathed into his Noſtrils the Breath of Life:* Where I obſerve a ſignal Inſtance of that Power of God, who could raiſe out of the Duſt of the Earth ſo admirable a Structure as the human Body. I obſerve alſo the Soul has a different Original from that of the Body; for whilſt the one was formed of Duſt, the other is breath'd from God himſelf, an Intimation of that great Article of Religion, *the Immortality of the Soul*; its Capacity of Exiſtence ſeparate from the Body, and without Dependence upon it: And this I am aſſured it ſhall do; for when the Duſt (that is, the Body made out of Duſt, as I here read) returns to the Earth as it was, the Soul ſhall return to God that gave it, *Eccleſ.* xii. I further obſerve the Dignity and Excellency of the Soul above the Body; the one is *of the Earth Earthy*, the other is a Spirit from Heaven; the one form'd out of Duſt, the other breath'd from God in an immediate Manner; *particula divinæ auræ*, as the Poet calls it: The Breath of Life, a Ray of Divinity, the Offspring of God. Oh may I duly value, and with ſuitable Care and Concern ſecure the Intereſt of mine immortal Soul! and not *deſpiſe*, proſtitute, ſacrifice it for the ſake of a little animated Duſt; this Lump of Earth, *my vile Body.* Hor. lib. 2. Sat. 2.

God having conſtituted Man Lord of this lower Creation, provides, for his greater Comfort and Delight, a moſt pleaſant Garden, where he was to reſide, and which he was to dreſs and keep, v. 14, 15. and here he receiv'd a Law, not to eat of a certain Tree, on pain of Death. v. 17. he had free Enjoyment of all the reſt, but this he muſt not touch: With reference to which let me obſerve,

1. That this is not properly the Covenant of Works God made with innocent Man; *that was before*; the Terms of which were contain'd and reveal'd in Nature, and the Duties of it engraven on the Heart of Man. 2. That this was only a *positive Law*, subservient to the Covenant of Nature, design'd to try Man's Obedience to his Creator and Sovereign, according to the original antecedent Law he was under; and therefore a Thing indifferent in it self was made Choice of for this Purpose, that it might appear whether he would be subject to the mere Will of his Maker, when the Matter requir'd of him had no intrinsick Goodness in it to influence his Obedience. So that 3. This Command or Restraint was properly *an Expression of God's Sovereignty*, and intended as a Mark thereof, and of his Creature's Dependence and Subjection; *(q. d.)* "Hear, O *Adam*, I have "made thee my Vicegerent in the World, and "have given thee all the Creatures, and all Paradise "for thy Subsistence and Delight; only this is a "reserv'd Right, in token that in the Throne I am "greater than thou. Enjoy thy God, thy self, "and a whole World, only, on thy Allegiance, "*touch not this Fruit.*"

4. The Penalty was Death; which is a general Word, including all Sorts of Miseries, of Body and Soul, Time and Eternity: In this Extent and Latitude, in Part at last, 'tis expounded in the next Chapter, (when the Sentence is pronounced against the several Offenders, and branch'd out into its Particulars) and accordingly it is executed upon the Apostate unbelieving World, and *in part* upon all Mankind. It was this Transgression that opened the Sluices, and let in all the Calamities which have overflowed us: The Vanity, the Sorrow, Suffering, and Pain, under which the whole Crea-

Creation groans; Sickneſs of Body, Horrour of Conſcience, Death, and even Hell are the Fruit of Sin, (and originally ſpring from this Sin, as the Occaſion of actual Sin) all the Evil we ſuffer, all we fear is comprehended in that Threatning, *In the day thou eateſt thereof thou ſhalt ſurely die.* There was indeed a Reprieve, and a Redemption from the full Curſe; but all Miſery, both in Kind and Degree, became due; and ſo much is inflicted ſtill, even on the redeem'd World, as makes them feel that they have ſinned, and that Sin is an evil thing and bitter. 5. When I reflect on the Nature of the Offence, I cannot think the Puniſhment at all unjuſt, or diſproportion'd to the Crime; nor do they conſider things with any great Judgment or Modeſty that preſume, as the Manner of ſome poor Worms is, to arraign the great Lawgiver on this Account, charging him fooliſhly: Threaten Death and Hell, ſay they, for eating an Apple! What Equity! But if it was ſo ſmall a Matter as they pretend, the more inexcuſable the Offender, that would not abſtain; eſpecially when the Will of God was ſo expreſs. In ſhort, the Diſobedience of this Fact was no leſs than *an Attempt to caſt off God's Sovereignty:* It was an Act of open Rebellion, a Sort of *diſputing the Throne with the Almighty*; and whether the unhappy aſpiring Creature had not ſomething of this in view (as may ſeem imply'd in what the Serpent inſinuated, v. 5. *Ye ſhall be as Gods)* I ſhall not ſay: But how heinous the Crime, for Duſt thus to rebel! how deſerving of the Penalty! and how exceeding abundant that Mercy which propounded a Saviour! the Grace that found a Ranſom!

And, oh my Soul, contemplate in this Inſtance, the horrid Nature of Sin, every actual, *deliberate, known Sin*, is *after the Similitude of* Adam's *Tranſ-*

greſſion, Rom. v. 14. 'tis a rejecting of God's Authority, and ſetting up our Wills againſt his. Oh! ſtand in awe, and ſin not: Let a *Thus ſays the Lord*, determine thy Obedience in every Inſtance; let the God that made thee always rule thee: There is ſo much Evil and Malignity in a *wilful, allow'd, deliberate Tranſgreſſion*, that no Grace reveal'd to us will excuſe it, or pardon it, *without ſuitable Repentance*; and, I queſtion not, had *Adam* perſiſted in a Courſe of ſuch Iniquity, even after God's Treaty of Grace with him, he had periſh'd, notwithſtanding the new Covenant, and the Merit of the promis'd Seed. Lord, ſubdue my Will entirely to thine; keep back thy Servant from preſumptuous Sins, that I may be innocent from the great Tranſgreſſion.

Adam being thus plac'd in Paradiſe, and favour'd with the Enjoyments thereof, yet wants ſomething to compleat his Happineſs; God himſelf declares his preſent State defective, v. 18. *'Tis not good that Man ſhould be alone*, I will make him an Help meet for him; and accordingly, in the Method, and Way here realted, a *ſecond Self* is form'd out of him, (an *Iſha* from *Iſh*) to be Partner of his Cares, and Joys, and to be join'd with him in an inviolable Bond of Love and Affection. Thus was Man advanc'd, and thus indulg'd by the Bounty of his Creator; the Conſideration of which highly aggravates the Guilt of his Offence; He ſinn'd when Goodneſs did moſt abound. May it be a Warning to all his Poſterity! There ſeem'd to want but one Thing to perfect the Happineſs of Paradiſe, and no ſooner is that granted, but all is loſt. O my Soul! guard againſt the Snares of a proſperous State; when thou haſt a Garden, and an *Eve*, beware of the Serpent: *David* was ſafe while attending the Sheepfolds, and praying in Caves

and

and Deſerts; but when advanc'd to the Throne, how wofully did he miſcarry?

I'll ſubjoin another Example, *viz.* the third Pſalm, which follows in the Calendar. The Pſalm being read, you make your Remarks in ſome ſuch Way as this. I learn, from the Title of the Pſalm, the Penman, and Occaſion: *A Pſalm of* David, *when he fled from* Abſalom *his Son*; and here ſay you, 1. I obſerve the Diſtreſs this great and good Man was in; the Particulars of which I read in the Hiſtory, 2 *Sam.* xv. 12. The Conſpiracy againſt him was ſo ſtrong, that his Caſe was thought deſperate: *Many ſaid, there was no Help for him in God.* 2. I obſerve the Exerciſe of his Faith, in a moſt eminent Manner, on this ſorrowful Occaſion: *But thou, Lord, art a Shield for me, my Glory*, &c. v. 3. He caſts his Burthen on the Lord, and reſts with unſhaken Confidence on his Power and Goodneſs: In the 14th Verſe, he ſignifies what Courſe he took in former Troubles; or if the Pſalm was penn'd after the Danger was over, it intimates what he did in his preſent Trouble, and ſhews with what Succeſs: *I cried to the Lord with my Voice, and he heard me*; the Words import his Earneſtneſs and Importunity. And hence, O my Soul, learn to expect Troubles and Exerciſes in the World: So great a Saint as *David*, thou ſeeſt, was not free from them: Nor object againſt any Inſtances of Trial the divine Wiſdom ſhall appoint. Was not *David* touch'd in a tender Part, when his own Subjects roſe up againſt him, and his own Son was at the Head of them? And yet he quarrels not. Endeavour to take up thy Croſs; to drink the Cup thy heavenly Father puts in thine Hand: We are not to chuſe our Burthens, but bear them, when God lays them on. O ſpare me in this; any thing but this, we are apt fooliſhly to ſay; and ſo might *David*; but neither

ther was he, nor am I, left to chuſe. Learn alſo, O my Soul, from the Example of this good Man, to make God thy Refuge in time of Trouble; uſe him as thy Shield; cry to him with thy Voice; and leave thy Concerns in his Hand: Thus did *David* in this Hour of Difficulty, and it was his uſual Courſe, as appears from his Pſalms.

3. I obſerve the bleſſed Fruit of his Faith, and Prayer: How eaſy, how calm was *David* hereupon? v. 5, 6. He had committed himſelf and Cauſe to God, and got on the Top of Mount *Olivet*, and there worſhipped, as we are told in the Hiſtory, 2 *Sam.* xv. 31. And how happy the Succeſs? How compos'd and ſerene his Mind? *I laid me down*, ſays he, *and ſlept, I'll not be afraid of ten Thouſands of the People*, &c. And now, I ſuppoſe, it was, when in this Employment, and in this bleſſed Frame, that he utter'd thoſe admirable Words, 2 *Sam.* xv. 25, 26. *Carry back the Ark of God into the City, if I ſhall find Favour in the Eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and ſhew me both it, and his Habitation; but if he thus ſay, I have no Delight in thee, behold here am I, let him do to me as ſeemeth good to him*, (q. d.) *A King, or a Victim, ſomething or nothing*, as thou, Lord, pleaſeſt: And having thus thrown himſelf at the Feet of the moſt High, and pour'd out his Soul on the Mount, whither he retir'd for Devotion, having disburthen'd himſelf of all his anxious, ſolicitous Thoughts; lo, all is huſh, and ſtill within; and he can ſleep in the midſt of Terror, and Deaths! v. 5. Surely never did Faith more triumph, never was Prayer more effectual. O my Soul! learn this way of Intercourſe with thy God; let a Time of Trouble be a Time of Prayer, and when thou art afraid, truſt in him; imitate the Reſignation, Submiſſion, Devotion, which is ſo admirably exemplify'd in this Pſalm;

beg

beg the ſame Spirit that, on this Occaſion, holy *David* had, and then come what will, thou art under a ſure Protection; God will be thy Dwelling-Place, thy Shield, thy All. In the 7th and 8th Verſes, he concludes with a Prayer for further, and full Deliverance, aſcribing the Glory of all Victory, Safety, and Succeſs, to God. Lord form and impreſs my Mind according to the Doctrine, Spirit, and Scope of this Pſalm; when in Trouble, like *David*, may I believe, and pray like him, with the ſame Fervour, and ſame Succeſs.

Allow me to offer one Inſtance more, in a very few Words, of ſuch Expoſition, and Improvement, as may be imitated by very ordinary Capacities: Suppoſe the 4th Pſalm fall in your Courſe of reading; you ſhould firſt endeavour to learn the Occaſion of it, which is of greateſt Uſe towards underſtanding and improving the Pſalm; and then conſider the ſubject Matter of the Pſalm. Here, ſay you, I find the Pſalmiſt in Trouble, (it may be, on the Account of *Abſalom*'s Conſpiracy againſt him) and therein making his Application to God, pleading former Experiences, and caſting himſelf upon his Mercy and Goodneſs, v. 1. Then he admoniſheth, and expoſtulateth with his Enemies, ſignifying, that all their Reproaches againſt, and Contempt of his Government and Authority, would be in vain, ſince by the divine Appointment he was advanc'd: Thence he proceeds to adviſe them calmly, to debate things with themſelves; to turn inwards, and talk with their own Hearts, and examine their Principles, Motives, *&c.* and to return to their Duty, v. 4, 5. In the mean time, however God ſhould order theſe Matters, with reference to the Oppoſition of his Enemies, his own Deliverance, *&c.* in which he was, in a good Meaſure, reſign'd, he moſt earneſtly deſires the Favour of God, the

Comforts of his Preſence, ſignify'd probably, by that Phraſe, *Lift up the Light of thy Countenance upon us*, (tho' not excluding any lower Inſtances of God's Favour in temporal Deliverances) which being granted, he triumphs in it, as Matter of greater Joy than all worldly Proſperity can afford; and accordingly, with an eaſy, undiſturb'd Mind, leaves himſelf, and all Events, to God, in the midſt of his Dangers. And hence, O my Soul, in all thy Troubles, learn where to go for Relief; make God thy Refuge, and then thou art ſafe; learn to depend, and learn to plead, as *David* here doth: Lord, teach me this divine Art; and may I always be mindful of the Admonition in the 4th Verſe, (neceſſary for others, as well as *David*'s Enemies) neceſſary to me at all times; may I ſtand in awe of God, and ſin not: And as a Means of my Safety herein, may I often withdraw from the Noiſe and Hurry of this World, ſilently and ſecretly commune with my own Heart, examining my Undertakings and Actions at the Bar of my Conſcience: And, Lord, whatever I want, deny me not the great diſtinguiſhing Bleſſing thy Servant ſo much valued, *viz. the Light of thy Countenance*; let *the many*, as many as will, purſue their Idols, and rejoice in their Increaſe of worldly Goods; let this be the one thing my Soul deſires.

And thus I have given ſome Specimens, and Examples, of what I deſign'd. If any think I have carried the Matter too high for the generality of Chriſtians, who cannot be ſuppos'd to have either Ability, or Leiſure for ſuch Performances in their daily Retirements: I anſwer; It is fit the Copy ſhould have ſome Perfection in it, which the Learner may not be able immediately to come up to; I don't expect every ſerious and devout Perſon ſhould enlarge upon each Chapter he reads, as fully, and in the

the ſame Method as in theſe Specimens: Artificial Logical Diviſions, cloſe and pertinent Reflections, are by no means neceſſary in the preſent Caſe, when Perſons are expounding and ſpeaking to themſelves. Nor is it likely that any, even the moſt watchful Chriſtians, ſhould be able conſtantly, and every Day, without Intermiſſion, to attend this Work, and carry on this Courſe of reading; they may ſometimes want Leiſure, ſometimes a Diſpoſition both of Body and Mind: And this unavoidably. Let me add, there are many ſincere Chriſtians, from whom little of this nature can be expected at any time: Such as have not books, or can ſcarce read them; that are of very low and mean Underſtandings, that have little Invention, Thought, Memory, *&c.* ſo that I don't pretend to impoſe, ſo much as by Advice, this as a Duty *upon all*, much leſs as a conſtant uninterrupted Duty, as if we cou'd never retire, worſhip God, and read a Chapter acceptably, unleſs we obſerved this Method.

But that which I inſiſt upon, and recommend, is, that they, who have a Capacity for it, would more ordinarily endeavour thus to improve the Scripture, in the Courſe of their reading. I wou'd firſtly and chiefly recommend it to Chriſtians of the higher Rank; ſuch as have good natural Parts, and Minds ſomewhat improv'd; that want (at leaſt need want) neither Books nor Time. If ſuch as theſe, wholly, or more uſually neglect the Duty, 'tis certainly their own Fault; owing not to Incapacity, but Indiſpoſition and Diſſaffection: *They can plead no Want, but that of a Spirit of Devotion.* And methinks it ſhou'd be Matter of uncomfortable Reflection to themſelves, to find an *Acumen* and Dexterity for every thing elſe; to be expert and ready in the Affairs of the Body, and Concernments

cernments of the World, and at the same time to be impotent and stupid in the Business of Religion; *reprobate to every good Work* of this kind. Oh! that Christians wou'd consider where their greatest Wisdom and Excellency lies; in what their truest Interest consists. If you have more Time, Books, Parts, greater Capacity and Advantages than others, you make but a sorry Use, and will give but a mean Account of them at last, if they terminate wholly in this Life, and are not employed in the Service of your Souls and Religion. You should endeavour to improve the Advantages, which by a kind Providence you are favour'd with: You have more Leisure, a better Education, greater Capacities than some others; but what will all this signify, unless you worship more and better than others?

I only add, that, notwithstanding the Concessions I have made, I can't question but the main Body of real Christians, tho' of lower and but common Abilities, may, with Success and Comfort, if they in earnest set about it, discharge this Duty, and improve their Bibles, as I am now advising. The Knowledge they have of the Principles of Religion, the Help of a stated Ministry, of a Commentator (which many at least may procure,) I may add the Help of God's Spirit (which will not be denied to those that sincerely ask it) will enable them to perform, in some good measure, what I am exhorting to: And therefore as I have recommended it to the serious Christian, I wou'd leave it upon his Conscience, earnestly requesting of him, that if he be convinced of the Usefulness and Excellency of the Method propos'd, he wou'd not neglect it; not only read the Scripture daily but ordinarily, at least some times; endeavour to expound and apply what you read.

If

If hitherto you have been Strangers to this Work, be no longer ſo; make a ſerious Trial, and be not diſcouraged, tho' you meet with Difficulties in your firſt Eſſays: Do your beſt, and God will aſſiſt and accept you; *to him that hath,* (and uſeth what he hath) *ſhall be given.* The bare reading of the Scripture, (without Underſtanding, Reflection, *&c.*) has no Religion, nor Devotion in it at all: You ſhould endeavour to apprehend what God ſpeaks in the Scripture, and what he ſpeaks to you in particular, which ſhould be followed with a ſuitable affectionate Application; and this is all I am here pleading for.

Sect. III.

The Heart is impreſs'd by the Scriptures.

Fifthly, endeavour to get the Heart impreſs'd by the Scriptures, and formed according to the Tenor and Purport thereof: The Word of God ſhould *dwell in us,* Coloſſ. iii. 16. The Rules, Doctrines, Laws, and very Spirit of the Bible, ſhould be tranſcrib'd into our Souls; ſo that it may become νόμος ἔμψυχος, a *Law within,* inwrought, as it were, into the Frame and Conſtitution of the Mind. Thus it was with the believing *Romans,* as the Apoſtle intimates, *Rom.* vi. 17. *Ye have obeyed, from the Heart, that Form of Doctrine which was delivered you,* or *into which* you are delivered; where the *Apoſtle* compares the Doctrine of the Goſpel to an Exemplar, Mold or Type [d] (τύπος) as in

εἰς ὃν παρεδόθητε τύπον διδαχῆς.

[d] Doctrinam Chriſti emphaticè vocat τύπον, qui eſt exemplar accuratiſſimum, ad cujus formam opus aliquod exigendum eſt, ut Typus Tabernaculi *Act.* vii. 44. *Steph. de Brais* in loc.

Stamps,

Stamps, Seals or Signets; accordingly to be delivered into ſuch a Form or Type, is to receive the Impreſſion of it, as the Wax does that of the Seal. Or if the Metaphor be borrowed from the *Goldſmiths*, the Senſe is the ſame; for as Metals, when melted, and caſt into a Mold, receive the Shape, Form, and Print thereof, ſo Chriſtians are formed and imprinted, as I may ſay, by the Scriptures; have the lively Signatures thereof upon them; are framed in their Deſires, Affections, *&c.* thereby; which is a Matter of ſo exceeding moment, that we find it mention'd as the diſtinguiſhing Privilege of the new Covenant or Goſpel Diſpenſation. *Jer.* xxxi. 33. *This ſhall be the Covenant which I will make with the Houſe of Iſrael, After thoſe days, ſaith the Lord, I will put my Law in their inward parts, and write it in their Hearts.*

This God has promis'd, and this he performs in ſome Degree, at the firſt Converſion, when the Chriſtian receives the regenerating Spirit. *Ye are the Epiſtle of Chriſt written, not with Ink, but with the Spirit of the living God,* 2 Cor. iii. 3. The Believer is then *born again of incorruptible Seed by the Word of God,* 1 Pet. i. 23. *Begotten through the Word, Jam.* i. 18. 'Tis further and more perfectly done afterwards, in the uſe of proper means, God ſtill writing his Law *more and more* in the Heart of the Believer. The whole Life of a Chriſtian is a ſort of a ſitting under the Hand of the Holy Spirit (to make uſe of another Metaphor) that he may, by new Strokes, finiſh the divine Image upon the Soul, and repreſent it with greater Beauty and Exactneſs: And as you ſhou'd, at other times, ſo eſpecially when converſing with the Word of God in your Oratories, *place your ſelves, as it were, under the Hand of the Spirit,* and under the Hammer of the Word, as the Compa-

riſon

ſon is, *Jer.* xxiii. 29. waiting for, and earneſtly deſiring further and deeper Impreſſions thereby. As the Word of God is the Seed of which we are born, ſo 'tis the Milk by which we grow, 1 *Pet.* ii. 2. and we ſhould deſire it for this Purpoſe, and accordingly receive it inwardly, and digeſt it. Chriſt ſanctifieth and cleanſeth the Church by the Word, and will continue to do ſo, 'till he hath made it glorious, and without Spot, *Epheſ.* v. 26, 27. O be concern'd to experience ſomething of this in your own Souls! (*viz.*) the ſanctifying, transforming Influences of the divine Word, impreſs'd by the holy Spirit: Read with a View to this, yielding your ſelves to the bleſſed Word of God, as Wax to the Seal; often ſaying, Lord, break this Rock of an hard Heart by the Hammer of thy Word; take away the Heart of Stone; caſt me into the Mold of thy Goſpel; and write thy Law in the fleſhly Tables of the Heart.

To explain my Meaning more fully, and ſet a Subject of ſo great Conſequence in as clear a Light as I can, let me obſerve a few things. 1. That the holy Scripture, or Law of God, is a ſort of a Copy of God's Nature, and an Exemplar or Pattern of ours; it ſhews what God is, and we ſhou'd be. Is God holy, juſt, and good? So is his Law, *Rom.* vii. 12. ſo is the Chriſtian in his Meaſure: Indeed the Law of God contains the Principles, Diſpoſition, and Spirit of the Church; there is no Grace, Excellency, or Virtue, in the whole Body of the Saints on Earth, but the Law of God exhibits it, as I may ſay, deſcribes and demands it. 2. The Law of God may then be ſaid to be written in our Hearts (or we deliver'd into the Mold or Form of it) when we do in our moſt inward Principles, Diſpoſition and Frame, as well as outward Conduct, anſwer thereto; when the divine

Likeneſs, inſtampt upon the Word, is by the Word inſtampt upon our Hearts; and our Deſires, Inclinations, and Affections, are regulated thereby. The Word is the Seal, our Hearts are the Wax; the Impreſſion receiv'd is the Effect of the Law, or the divine Temper communicated: What is ſaid of the Promiſes, may be ſaid of the other Parts of Scriptures, *viz.* that by them we *are Partakers of a divine Nature*, 2 Pet. i. 4. The Promiſes, I may add, the Precepts, Threatnings, all the Rules and Doctrines, and even Hiſtories of the Word, are uſeful to beget and promote in us a divine Nature; and ſo far as they are written in the Heart, or the Heart is impreſs'd by them, ſomething of that Nature is wrought in us: And this is what we ſhould, all of us, endeavour for, as the Fruit and Effect of a devout Converſation with the Scripture. For further Illuſtration,

3. Let me obſerve, that as the main Scope of the Bible, and Subſtance of Religion, is contained in ſeveral general and comprehenſive Laws and Maxims; ſo it ſhou'd be our great Concern, in reading the *Bible*, to get the Heart impreſs'd and form'd by theſe. To mention ſome of them; as that, *Deut.* vi. 5. *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and all thy Soul, and all thy Might*; which our Saviour calls *the firſt and great Commandment*, Matt. xxii. 37. adding, as ſecond to it, v. 38. *Thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour as thy ſelf.* Now theſe Laws are as a Seal, or Mold, by which we are to be impreſs'd, and into which we are to be caſt; and the Effect of them, or Impreſſion receiv'd, is a Frame and Temper of Spirit, and Courſe of Action agreeable thereto: As for Inſtance, with reference to the firſt of theſe, *loving God with all the Heart*, &c. the Impreſſion receiv'd is, *an Acknowledgment of God, of his Being and Attributes*;

tributes; an Esteem of him as greatest and best; an Adherence to him as the supreme Good; an entire Devotedness to his Service, &c. and with respect to the other, *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self*, the Impression receiv'd carries in it, *an Acknowledgment of his Rights, an equitable Construction of his Claims (putting our selves in his stead) of his Words, Actions, Pleas, with a Disposition always to do him Justice, and, as we can, shew him Mercy.*

The same may be observ'd of those general Maxims and Laws of our Saviour, (the great Foundations of all true Religion) *One thing is needful*, Luke x. 42. *Seek first the Kingdom of God*, Matt. vi. 33. *Labour not for the Meat that perishes, but for that which endures to everlasting Life*, John vi. 27. *What is a Man profited, if he gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul; or what shall a Man given in exchange for his Soul?* Matt. xvi. 26. These are the great Laws of our Religion: They direct us in our Views, Choice, and Pursuits; representing eternal things in their Reality and Importance; teaching us a Preference of them (an Infinite Preference, if I may so say) to the little things of this little World. *One thing is needful! What shall a Man give in exchange for his Soul?* Such a Maxim impress'd on the Heart, presently throws the World under Foot, and inscribes Vanity upon its greatest Glory! O, says the Christian thus impress'd, that I may secure my eternal Interest! *Lord, one thing have I desired of thee; thy loving Kindness is better than Life*; grant me thy self, and deny me all: His Mind is rais'd above Time to Eternity, and help'd to look upon present and seen things with Shyness and Indifferency. *Deus meus & omnia*, My God, and my All, is his Language: Eternity is the Mark at which he levels.

There is a Variety of particular Moral and Divine Laws ſcatter'd up and down the Bible, by which the Heart of the Chriſtian ſhould be impreſs'd; a few of which I ſhall mention, and reduce them to three Heads, reſpecting God, our Neighbour, our ſelves. Such as reſpect God; as that we love him, *Pſal.* xxxi. 23. that we fear him, *Pſal.* xxxvii. 4. that we truſt in him, and commit all our Affairs into his Hands, *Pſal.* xxxvii. 3, 5. *Prov.* iii. 6. that we own his Providence as univerſal, ſupream, 2 *Chron.* xvi. 9. *Pſal.* ciii. 19. that we worſhip him, and him alone, *Matt.* iv. 10. by Prayer, Thankſgiving, Praiſe, *&c. Epheſ.* vi. 18. *Philip.* iv. 6. that we keep his *Sabbaths, and reverence his Sanctuary*, Lev. xix. 30. that we chuſe him, and reſt in him as our only Happineſs, *Pſal.* xvi. 5, 6.——lxxiii. 25. that we make his Glory our End in all our Actions, 1 *Cor.* xix. 31. that we ſet him always before us, *Pſal.* xvi. 8.

Precepts reſpecting our Neighbour are, that we love him as our ſelves, as before; that we *do juſtly, love Mercy*, Micah. vi. 8. *put on Charity* towards him, *Col.* iii. 14. a glorious Deſcription of which we have, 1 *Cor.* xiii. (Lord, caſt us into that Form, that Mold) that all Malice, Bitterneſs, *&c.* be put away, *Epheſ.* iv. 31, 32. that we continue to love him, pray for him, do him good, tho' an Enemy, *Matt.* xv. 44. that we forgive *one another, as God, for Chriſt's ſake, hath forgiven us*, Epheſ. iv. *ult.* that we *be not overcome of Evil, but overcome Evil with Good*, Rom. xii. 21. To which may be added the whole Claſs of relative Laws or Precepts, as I may call them, ſuch as concern the Duties of Magiſtrates and Subjects, Miniſters and People, Husbands and Wives, Parents and Children, Maſters and Servants, *&c.*

Laws and Precepts concerning our ſelves (or Self-Government) are, that we *live ſoberly*, Tit. ii. 14. that we be *poor in Spirit*, Matth. v. 3. that we be *meek and lowly*, Matth. xi. 29. *humble*, 1 Pet. v. 5. *careful for nothing*, Phil. iv. 6. content with our Condition, *Heb.* xiii. v. that we be chaſte, 1 *Theſſ.* iv. 4. *temperate in all things*, 1 Cor. ix. 25. that we *deny our ſelves*, Matth xvi. 24. *mortify the Fleſh*, Rom. viii. 13. *be ſpiritually minded*, Rom. viii. 6. *watch and keep our Garments*, Rev. xvi. 15. that we *redeem* and improve our *Time*, Eph. v. 16.

Now, by theſe and ſuch like Laws and Precepts, our Hearts and Spirits ſhould be formed; and we ſhould converſe with our Bibles with an Eye hereto; endeavouring to get theſe, and all the reſt of the divine Laws written on the Heart, ſo as that there may be produced a Diſpoſition and Temper, that in ſome Meaſure anſwers them. For Inſtance, to give a Specimen or two of what I mean: As to that Precept, *Pſal.* xxxiv. 9. *Fear the Lord all ye his Saints*: the correſpondent or anſwerable Impreſſion is, *Reverence of the Great God, a Senſe of his Authority over us, and Preſence with us at all times; Subjection of Soul to him, care not to offend*, Nehem. v. 15. *ordering our Thoughts, Words and Actions as under his Eye.* So that as to Precept, 1 *Pet.* v. 5. *Be clothed with Humility*; the Impreſſion received imports, *juſt Thoughts of our own Littleneſs, Guilt, and Vileneſs; a Conviction that we deſerve not the leaſt of God's Mercies; a meek and quiet Spirit under any Diſappointments, Croſſes, and Sufferings, as ſeeing our own Sin, and the Hand of God therein, whoever be the Inſtruments; Contentment with our Portion and Lot; preferring others before our ſelves*, &c. The like might be ſhewn with regard to that Law (imply'd) 1 *Cor.* ix. 25. *Temperate in all things*; referring, I ſuppoſe, to the right moderating and governing the

Body, the bringing it into, and keeping it in Subjection; where the Impreſſion receiv'd muſt include, *a Senſe of the Dignity and Excellency of the Soul above the Body, and of the rational and divine Life, above the animal Life, or Life of Senſe; diſpoſing to a conſtant Care to reſtrain and moderate the Appetites, Paſſions, and Affections, with reference to Meat, Drink, Sleep, Recreations, and all worldly Enjoyments and bodily Pleaſures; and this in Subſerviency to the Intereſt of the Soul, and Advancement of the divine Life.* To give one Inſtance more in that Precept, *Prov.* iii. 6. *Acknowledge God in all thy ways*; the Impreſſion hence receiv'd (or what is produced in us thereby, is, *a Belief of God's Providence ſuperintending, over-ruling and ordering all things; a Conviction of our own Inſufficiency to direct and conduct our ſelves, and give Succeſs to any of our Undertakings; a conſtant ſteady Dependence on God for Wiſdom, Support, and a Bleſſing in what we do; a referring all things to God; a Deſire to know and comply with his Will in every Action; Submiſſion to his Will in all Events.*

Theſe are ſome of the Precepts that will frequently occur to you in reading the Bible; and in ſuch a way as I have here exemplified, ſhould they impreſs the Heart. O endeavour that they may do ſo: Remember God has promiſed it, as the ſpecial Privilege of the New-Teſtament-Church, that he *will write* his *Law in their Hearts.* Plead this Promiſe, and wait for the Accompliſhment of it, particularly when ſolemnly reading the Scriptures, in a way of Worſhip: And when any thing offers, of more ſpecial Concernment to you, look up to God; beg a Touch of the divine Spirit; Lord, ſay you, write this Law in my Heart, and keep it upon the Thoughts of the Imagination of my Heart for ever.

5. There

5. There are ſundry Evangelical Laws and Precepts, ſtrictly and properly ſo, which we ſhould endeavour to get our Hearts impreſs'd by; as, believing in Chriſt, *John* xiv. 1. praying in the Name of Chriſt, *John* xvi. 26. doing all in his Name, *Col.* iii. 17. depending upon his Merit, Grace, Interceſſion, 2 *Tim.* ii. 2. *Heb.* iv. 14, 16. looking for Acceptance in him, and him alone, *Eph.* i. 6. not grieving nor *quenching the Spirit*, Eph. iv. 30. 1 Theſſ. v. 19. The Evangelical Impreſſion anſwering to ſuch Laws, is *a Conviction that Jeſus is the Meſſiah; a Perſuaſion of the Neceſſity and Uſefulneſs of his Office as Mediator; an Apprehenſion of our own Guilt, Weakneſs, Miſery; a Conſent to his Government; a relying on him in his whole Office:* And, with reference to the Spirit, *accepting his Help, cheriſhing his Influences, as a Spirit of Conviction, Illumination, Prayer, Holineſs, Conduct, Comfort and Sealing, committing our ſelves to him in all our Work and Walk.*

6. Let me add, that the great Laws and Rules of practical Religion, contained in the *Bible*, are exemplified, many of them, in the Lives of holy Men there recorded; where you may view them with Advantage, and from whence you ſhould endeavour to tranſcribe them into your own Hearts and Lives: They are exemplified moſt eminently in the Life of the bleſſed Jeſus. How conſtant his Acknowledgment of God and Providence, and Dependence thereon? *Pſal.* xxii. 18, 19. *John* xii 27. How prayer-full and devout was he? *Matth.* xiv. 23. *Mark* i. 35. *Luke* vi. 12. How diligent and zealous in his Work? *John* iv. 32, 34. How faithful in his Office? *Heb.* ii. 17. *Rev.* i. 5. How ſubmiſſive to the Father's Will? *Luke* xxii. 42. How devoted to his Name and Honour? *John* viii. 50.——xii. 27, 28. How compaſſionate, charitable

table and kind? *Matt.* xv. 32. *Acts* x. 38. How forbearing towards his Enemies? 1 *Pet.* ii. 22. *Luke* xxiii. 34. and towards his Friends? *Matt.* xxvi. 41. How ſedate and compoſed in the midſt of Hurries, Inſults, and Applauſes? being never tranſported in an unſeemly manner, but always having a full Poſſeſſion of himſelf, *Matt.* xii. 19. ——xxii. 9. In a Word, he was holy, harmleſs, undefil'd, without Sin, and without Guile, *Heb.* vii. 26. 1 *Pet.* ii. 22.

And tho' there never was ſo bright an Example, as that of Chriſt's; who was not only a perfect Man, but more than a Man; *God manifeſt in the Fleſh:* Yet we have other Examples highly inſtructive, in which the Word of Life was held forth with ſome Eminency; as, the Example of *Moſes*, the *Apoſtles*, *Prophets*, &c. How meek was *Moſes?* How patient was *Job?* How devout was *David?* How zealous and heavenly-minded St. *Paul?* How manifeſtly did all of them (beſides their more peculiar and appropriate Excellencies) appear under the Power and Influence of the Religion they profeſs'd? How evidently were ſuch Laws as I have mentioned, impreſs'd on their Hearts, and ſhewn in their Converſations?

I might inſtance in the *Patriarchs*, *Moſes* and others, in that Catalogue of Saints we have in the 11th of *Hebrews*. *Moſes*, when he came to Years, in the Strength and Vigour of his Age, bravely deſpis'd the Preferments and Glory of a Court, preferring even Perſecution among God's People thereto; and all on that great Principle, ſo much recommended by our Lord, *a Belief and Value of eternal things;* he had reſpect to the *Recompence of Reward*, Heb. xi. 24, 25. So thoſe primitive Confeſſors, *Heb.* x. 34. they took joyfully the ſpoiling of their Goods, knowing in themſelves they had a better

better and more enduring Subſtance. How brave a Part did *Daniel* and the three Children act in the Court of a Pagan Monarch? *We will not worſhip thy Image, O King,* ſay they; *the God whom we ſerve is able to deliver us,* &c. 'Tis plain the Laws concerning fearing, truſting, worſhipping their God, had taken deep hold of them; they fear'd not the Wrath of the King, as is ſaid of *Moſes,* but endured, as ſeeing him that is inviſible: And how much of Chriſt's Law and Goſpel did that great Miniſter of it bear in his Heart? the *Apoſtle Paul* I mean: I deſire, ſays he, to know nothing but *Chriſt, and him crucify'd,* 1 Cor. ii. 2. and again, *Acts* xx. 24. *None of theſe things move me, neither count I my Life dear, ſo I may finiſh my Courſe with Joy.*

But I muſt not further purſue the Argument, but refer the Reader to the Hiſtory of Scripture, where he will find himſelf *compaſs'd about with a Cloud of Witneſſes,* all bearing Teſtimony to the Truth and Excellency of God's Law, and acting under the Authority and Influence thereof, as thoſe that had receiv'd it into their Hearts, as a governing vital Principle. Indeed their Examples were not perfect; they had not fully tranſcrib'd the great Rule, and therefore to be followed with Caution and Reſerve: But ſo far as they had attained, and appeared to have copied out the divine Law, we ſhould copy after them: And it will be of conſiderable uſe to us, to view the Tranſcript of the divine Law in the Lives of the Saints, tho' leſs perfect than the Original it ſelf. Look therefore to thoſe holy Men that have gone before you, and *look to Jeſus the Author and Finiſher of your Faith,* deſiring and endeavouring, that the ſame Spirit may be in you that was in them: Mind your Pattern, the Divine Law, *chiefly and moſtly;* but you may ſometimes alſo profitably mind thoſe who

who were eminent Proficients in it. But I muſt check my ſelf: If I have drawn out the Diſcourſe too long on this and the foregoing Head, and made them diſproportionate to the reſt, the Importance of the Matter muſt be my Excuſe. The Law of God ſanctifies and ſaves (as a Means) not as written in the Bible with Ink, but as written in the Heart by the Spirit of the living God: In the one Place 'tis a dead Letter, in the other a vital Principle; and O that it may be thus written, more and more written in all our Hearts.

SECT. IV.

Of practiſing and applying Scripture to our ſelves: Of the Affections to be exercis'd in reading, &c.

SIxthly, Make a faithful Application of what you read to your own Souls, as there is Occaſion; look into the perfect Law of Liberty, not as forgetful *Hearers* or Readers, *but Doers of the Word*, Jam. i. 22. Practice ſhould be the End of all our reading; the Scriptures were wrote that we *ſin not*, 1 John ii. 1. and we ſhould read them, that we might thence learn our Duty, and be directed in the way of Life. "The Scripture will be read "with the greateſt Profit, ſays *Eraſmus*, if, when "a Man takes it into his Hand, it be with this "Mind, *ut ſeipſo reddatur melior*, &c. that he may "become a better Man, and does not accommo- "date the Goſpel to his own Affections, but cor- "rect his own Life, and all his Deſires, by the

"Rule

" Rule of it." The Bible is a *Doctrine according to Godlineſs*, 1 Tim. vi. 3. 'tis *profitable for Correction, for Inſtruction in Righteouſneſs*, 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16. But then you muſt uſe and apply it for this Purpoſe; compare your ſelves with it, and judge your ſelves by it.

As for Inſtance, when you find your ſelves condemned by the Word, *i. e.* that your Temper, Practice, Conduct is contrary thereto, apply the Cenſure, take the Reproof to your ſelves, and receive it for your Correction and Inſtruction; and if you note it down in your *Diary*, recording both the Time, Chapter, and Verſe, it may be an Advantage to you. Suppoſe, for Example, the Section or Portion of Scripture you read be, *Pſal.* xv. where you have the Character of a good Man, *viz.* That *he walketh uprightly, worketh Righteouſneſs, and ſpeaketh the Truth in his Heart; that he backbiteth not with his Tongue*, &c.—If you are conſcious you want Reproof or Correction upon any of theſe Heads, make the Application with all Faithfulneſs; and let there be a Remark in your Diary, referring to this Matter (if you ſee Reaſon for it, as having been highly defective in theſe Particulars) with the Time when, and ſuch Reflections as you made upon it.

7. Read the Scripture with pure Intentions, and Minds free from Prejudice, Prepoſſeſſion and Byaſs, as far as poſſible; we are to *lay aſide all Filthineſs, and Superfluity of Naughtineſs* (every Paſſion, Luſt, Corruption, every human Regard and worldly Conſideration) that we may *receive the ingrafted Word*, *Jam.* i. 21. All Rule, Authority, and Power, (to allude to that, 1 *Cor.* xv.) muſt be put down, and every carnal Thought brought in Subjection to the Word. We ſhould always deſire to know the Truth, and be willing any thing ſhould be true, that we find ſo, what-

whatever Intereſt or human Authority it may contradict: We muſt not interpret Scripture by preconceived Opinions, or any Scheme of Doctrines we have embraced, without ſufficient Examination, which we may call the *Analogy of Faith*. This may lead us off the only true Foundation, and introduce a *Rabbi*, or Maſter on Earth, which our great Lord and Maſter in Heaven has caution'd us againſt. A Chriſtian, *as ſuch*, is ſubject to the only Lord that bought him; and we ſhould often remember with what Solemnity his Authority was recommended to the Church, when he appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration, in his *Shechinah*, and a Voice came from the excellent Glory, *This is my beloved Son, hear ye him*, Matth. xvii. 5.

O endeavour to be ſteddy and reſolved in this great Point: Let not [e] human Authority or worldly

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[e] Diſputing is not the Buſineſs of this practical Diſcourſe, or it would be eaſy to produce numerous Teſtimonies, both ancient and modern, for the Authority of Scripture as *our only Rule*; notwithſtanding 'tis with ſo much Difficulty we admit it as ſuch, when brought to the Trial. I ſhall, however, inſert a few Paſſages to this Purpoſe from ſome of the early Writers of the Church, whoſe Sentiments, on other Occaſions, are wont to carry conſiderable Weight.

Hom. 13. on 2 Cor. vii. "Is it not abſurd, ſays *Chryſoſtom*, that, having to deal in "Money-Matters, Men will not truſt to others, but the "Counters are brought out, and they caſt up the Sum; but "in the Matters of their Souls, are led and drawn aſide by "the Opinions of other Men, and this, when they have an "exact Scale (wherein to weigh all things) and an exact "Rule or Square (whereby to meaſure them) the Dictate of "the divine Laws? Therefore, I beſeech and entreat you all, "that not minding *what ſuch or ſuch a Man ſaith* about theſe "things, you would conſult the holy Scriptures concerning "them." To the ſame Purpoſe the Emperor *Conſtantine*, in his Speech in the Council of *Nice*, Εὐαγγελικαὶ βίβλοι καὶ Ἀποστολικαὶ καὶ τῶν παλαιῶν προφητῶν τὰ θεοπίσματα, &c.

Vid. Dr. *Patrick's* Search the Scr. p. 60.

Theodor. Hiſt. Eccl. lib. 1. c. 6.

"The

ly Views, make Comments on the Bible for you; chuſe your Religion, form your Articles of Faith, or modify your Profeſſion: *How can you believe,* (ſaith Chriſt) *which receive Honour one of another, and ſeek not the Honour that cometh from God only?* John v. 44. We ſhou'd read the *Bible* with the ſame Temper the Apoſtle, when ſtruck to the Ground by the Light from Heaven, put that Queſtion, *Acts* ix. 6. *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* Too many are reſolv'd what to believe, and what to do, before they conſult their Maſter, or examine their Rule, and therefore either neglect the Bible, hating the Light, leſt their Deeds ſhould be reprov'd; like the *Florentine* Phyſician, that could not be perſuaded to look on the Heavens thro' a Teleſcope, leſt it ſhou'd make him ſtagger concerning *Ariſtotle*'s Principles, which, ſaid he, I am reſolved to maintain as long as I live: Or if they at all converſe with their Bible, it is but in Complement, and out of Cuſtom; they don't pay a due Subjection to it, as the only Rule of their

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" The Books of the Evangeliſts and Apoſtles, and the Pro-
" phetic Oracles, plainly inform us what Opinions and Sen-
" timents to entertain concerning God; wherefore all un-
" friendly contention being laid aſide, let us proceed to debate
" and prove the things in queſtion *from the ſacred Writings.*"
And well it had been for the Church, had that Council, and all other ſucceeding, taken his Advice, ſays another; μὴ μοιλε- Theodor.
γισμοῖς ϗ συλλογισμοῖς ἀνθρωπίνοις προσιέγκης, &c. " Don't Dial. 1.
" offer Reaſons and Arguments *human*, and that are drawn
" from the Authority of Men; I believe and obey *only the*
" *holy Scripture.*" So *Baſil*, " Let the divinely inſpired Epiſt. 80.
" Scripture determine the whole Controverſy among us."
And this is the Language of all Antiquity receiv'd with Applauſe in Proteſtant Churches; being indeed the very Foundation on which they ſtand; and yet how often forgotten upon occaſion!

Faith

Faith and Practice, but wreſt it in favour of their Prejudices, Honour, Intereſts, and Luſts; they read it with Spectacles of colour'd Glaſs, which makes it appear juſt as they wou'd have it, according to the *Medium* thro' which they behold it. But this is not to receive the Word, *as it is indeed the Word of God*, nor will you have the Comfort and Advantage of the holy Scripture, till you have learnt to treat it with more Reverence, and every Intereſt and Affection be made to ſtoop to the Authority of it.

8. Read with ſuitable Affections: *An honeſt Heart* is requiſite, and partly implied in what was ſaid before; the Seed of God's Word muſt be receiv'd into *good Ground*, Luke viii. 15. Humility and Teachableneſs of Mind is alſo requiſite; *unleſs you become as little Children, ye cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*, Matt. xviii. 3. Chriſt was anointed to preach glad Tidings *to the Meek*. They only will value the *Bible*, and learn of Chriſt, who are meek, and not puff'd up with the Conceit of their own Wiſdom and Sufficiency, but are pliable and teachable. The Law of God makes wiſe the *ſimple*, ſays the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* xix. 7. The Word in the Original literally ſignifies, one that is eaſily perſuaded, and in this Place may intend the *humble*; ſuch as are ſenſible of their own Weakneſs and Infirmity; of their Need of divine Inſtruction, and readily embrace it. *Auſtin* (in his 56th Epiſtle) directing *Dioſcorus* how to come to the Knowledge of the Truth, tells him, "There is no way to "attain it, but what God, who knows our In-"firmity, has appointed; and that way is, *firſt* Hu-"mility, *ſecondly* Humility, *thirdly* Humility; adding, "Shou'dſt thou ask me never ſo often about "the way, I could make no other Anſwer: Not "but that there are other Precepts which concern

"Reli-

" Religion, but, unleſs in all the Good we do, " Humility go before it, attend it, and follow " after it, *totum extorquet de manu ſuperbia*, Pride " and Vanity will ruine all. And therefore, as " *Demoſthenes*, being ask'd what was the chief Pre- " cept of Eloquence, anſwered, *Pronunciation*; " and what the next, anſwer'd, *Pronunciation*; " what the third, ſtill anſwer'd, *Pronunciation:* So " ſhou'd you ask me never ſo often concerning " the great Laws of the Chriſtian Religion, I " have nothing to anſwer, but *Humility, Humility.* O! endeavour for this *firſt, ſecond,* this great and moſt important capital Grace; particularly in reading the holy Scriptures. *To this Man will I look,* ſays God, *that is poor,* Iſai. lxvi. 2. *Receive with Meekneſs the ingrafted Word,* James i. 21. *With the lowly is Wiſdom,* Prov. xi. 2. The great things of the Goſpel are *hid from the wiſe and prudent, and revealed to Babes,* Matt. xi. 25.

Further, Read with Reverence, conſider God ſpeaks to you in his Word; and therefore, to allude to that in *Exod.* iii. 5. *Put off your Shoes, for the place whereon you ſtand is holy Ground. All Scripture is given by Inſpiration of God*; and when you read it, eſpecially in a way of Worſhip, you ſhould carefully preſerve an Awe and Reverence upon your Minds. Conſider, you are not converſing with the Word of God only, but with God in his Word; accordingly repreſent God to your ſelf, *ſet him before you,* and receive the Inſtructions and Admonitions that are here given; form the Purpoſes and Reſolutions that are proper on this occaſion, *as in his Preſence,* and under his Eye.

Further endeavour, that your Affections may anſwer the particular Subjects, which may occur in reading. When you are converſant with Threat-

nings, with Judgments, with the Terrors of the Lord; an holy Fear and Dread ſhou'd poſſeſs your Minds, eſpecially if you find your ſelves in any meaſure ſtruck at therein. Good *Joſiah* rent his Clothes at reading the Law, 2 *Kings* xxii. 11. *Noah* receiv'd the Warning and Threatning of an approaching Deluge with Fear, *Heb.* xi. 7. which put him upon preparing an Ark for the ſaving of himſelf and his Houſe; and you know the *Prophet* gives this as the Character of the moſt acceptable Worſhipper, that *he trembles at God's Word*, Iſa. lxvi. 2. When you are converſant with the glad Tidings of the Goſpel, the Promiſes of Life and Salvation by a Redeemer; Love, Joy, Gratitude, Praiſe, *&c.* are proper Affections.

In ſhort, the Scripture contains Subjects ſo important in themſelves, and of ſuch Concernment to us, that it ſhould not be read in a dull manner, and without ſome Warmth of Affection. As the Diſciples Hearts burnt within them whilſt Chriſt opened the Scriptures, ſo ours ſhould glow and burn when we read them; and indeed, herein, in part, conſiſts the Difference we ſhould put between *divine* and *common* Writings: We are to worſhip God by the Exerciſe of devout Affections, while we converſe with his Word; imitating what's ſaid of Venerable *Bede* (for nothing more venerable than this) *that he often ſhed Tears when he read the holy Scriptures.*

9. Make conſtant and preſent Uſe of the Scriptures you read: Don't only entertain your Minds ſpeculatively with the Truths of them, but refer them to After-uſe; as in the Devotion you may be now engag'd in; where the Portion of Scripture you have been upon, will ordinarily ſupply you with Matter for Meditation and Prayer, as well as prepare the Mind for it. Uſe it alſo in time of

Tempta-

Temptation, as Chriſt you know did, *Matt.* iv. 10. and in your common Buſineſs and Converſe. As the Word of Chriſt is *to dwell in you*, ſo it ſhould accompany you whereſoever you go, and in whatever you are about, giving Laws to your Thoughts, Words, and Actions; ſanctifying your common Employments, and conducting you in the Management of 'em. Uſe it alſo for your Refreſhment, Support and Comfort throughout the Day: *Bind the Commandment continually*, ſays *Solomon*, *upon thine Heart, and tie it about thy Neck. When thou goeſt, it ſhall lead thee; when thou ſleepeſt, it ſhall keep thee; and when thou wakeſt, it ſhall talk with thee*, Prov. vi. 21, 22. You may often turn aſide in the Day, and review in your Thoughts ſomething of the laſt Chapter or Pſalm you read in your Oratory; eſpecially when any thing occurs in Providence, that makes it more than ordinarily ſuitable to you: As the good Man delights in the Law of the Lord, ſo he meditates therein Day and Night, *Pſal.* i. 20. And *David* tells you, that God's Statutes were his Songs in the Houſe of his Pilgrimage, *Pſal.* cxix. 54. Songs with him by Night, *Pſal.* xlii. 8. You ſhould read God's Word for daily Service, and have frequent Recourſe to it, when alone, or in Company, and at all times, as Occaſion requires.

10. Depend on God, and beg his Spirit for your Aſſiſtance and Help in all this Work; I mean, to underſtand, apply, and improve his Word, as you have been directed. How ſucceſsful and devout a Student was *David* in the holy Scriptures? How great a Proficient therein? He tells you he lov'd it, that it was his Meditation all the Day, and that hereby he was wiſer than his Enemies, than the Ancients, than all his Teachers, *Pſal.* cxix. 97, 98, 99. And yet you often find him putting up his

Petitions for further Light and Inſtruction; as v. 18. *Open thou mine eyes, that I may ſee wondrous things out of thy Law.* " Here, as the excellent " Mr. *How* remarks, he ſuppoſes many undiſco- " ver'd Wonders, which *more open Eyes* might yet " behold in that external Revelation of God's Mind, " which was then afforded (and which was wont " in thoſe Days to go under the Name of *his Law*, " tho' it contain'd Hiſtories, Prophecies, and Pro- " miſes, as well as Precepts) although he was no " Stranger to thoſe Records, nor little inſighted " into them, he yet apprehended a Need of more " Light and better Eyes; which he therefore de- " ſires." And to the ſame Purpoſe he prays, v. 27. *Make me to underſtand the way of thy Precepts.* And again, v. 33. *Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy Statutes:* Requeſts he often repeats. Let us imitate this great and good Man, and depend on God and his Spirit for Light, Inſtruction, and Influence in reading his Word: Not that we are to expect *a new Light*, as that ſignifies a new Revelation and Rule, either diſtinct from, or ſupplemental to the Scripture Rule; nor are we to lay aſide our Reaſon and Underſtanding, relying upon an immediate *Afflatus* and Inſpiration in reading and interpreting Scripture, which wou'd be downright Enthuſiaſm: Notwithſtanding I doubt not we may, conſiſtent with the greateſt Sobriety, expect and look for the Spirit's Help in reading the Bible, and in order to a ſuitable Improvement of it. The Spirit was promis'd to abide with the Church for ever, *Joh.* xiv. 16. as for other Purpoſes, ſo for a *Spirit of Wiſdom and Revelation in the Knowledge of Chriſt*, Eph. i. 17. (*i. e.*) of internal Revelation, opening the Eyes of the Underſtanding. Nor will you ever know the Truths of Chriſt, and of the Bible, ſo as to feel the Power, Influence, and Authority of them upon the

Delighting in God, II. p. 31.

Heart

Heart and Conſcience, without *Internal Revelation,* and unleſs the Spirit open the Eyes and Heart.

There is indeed a Knowledge of, and Aſſent to divine Truths (*i. e.* to the Propoſitions contain'd in Scripture) which a Perſon may have without any ſpecial Help of the Spirit, and is ſometimes attain'd by Men of Parts and Letters, tho' unſanctify'd, in a Degree of Eminency above what even true Chriſtians, of lower Capacities, can ordinarily attain. But this Knowledge and Aſſent is ſpeculative, reſteth in the Head, and does not deſcend into the Heart, transforming and changing that: And therefore ſuch Perſons are ſaid not to know, *Iſa.* i. 3, 4. *Jer.* ix. 3. Not to believe, *Num.* xiv. 11. *Pſal.* cvi. 24. The Knowledge and Faith they have is ineffectual, a lifeleſs and dead thing, and in God's Account a Nullity. " That Knowledge, " Apprehenſion, and Faith, ſays the foremention'd Ibid. 36. " Author, which is the only Product of the ex- " ternal Revelation, even recommended by the " moſt advantageous convincing Circumſtances, is " too faint to command the Soul. Who amongſt " all the People of the *Jews,* at Mount *Horeb,* " could have any Doubt but the Authority, that " avouch'd the Law there given them, was divine? " and yet how boldly do they ruſh into Idolatry, " againſt the expreſs Letter of that Law, while " the Sound of that dreadful *Voice of Words,* which " delivered it, could hardly, one wou'd think, " be well out of their Ears; and tho' they could " not doubt of God's Authority, yet, for all that, " their frequent Rebellions are plainly reſolved into " their Infidelity: *How long will this People provoke* " *me; how long will it be ere they believe me?* Num. " xiv. 4." He adds, " Whatever way a Man " comes to be certain of any thing, that hath a

" contrary Tendency to the Bent of his habitually
" wicked Heart, he needs more than the Evidence
" of the Truth of the thing to make it efficaci-
" ouſly determine his Will againſt his former vi-
Pag. 39. " cious Courſe. In ſhort, ſays he, Faith is a Part
" of Homage pay'd to the great God, which is
" to be eſtimated ſincere, according as it anſwers
" the End for which the things to be believed
" were revealed: That End is not to beget only
" the Notion of thoſe things, as Truths that are
" to be lodg'd in the Mind, and go no further;
" as if they were to be underſtood true, only that
" they might be ſo underſtood; but that the Per-
" ſon might accordingly have his Spirit form'd,
" and might ſhape the Courſe of his whole Con-
" verſation. Therefore it is call'd the *Obedience* of
" Faith; and the ſame Word which is wont to be
" rendred *Unbelief*, ſignifies Diſobedience, Obſti-
" nacy, Unperſuadableneſs, being from a Theme
" which ſignifies to *perſuade*. So that then this
" Homage is given to the eternal God, when his
" Revelation is comply'd with, and ſubmitted to,
" *according to the true Intent* and Purpoſe of it;
" which that it may be, requires that the Spirit
" urge the Soul with his Authority, and over-
" power it to an awful Subjection thereto. 'Tis
" neceſſary (by reaſon of the Apoſtacy) that the
" enlightning Communication, which he tranſmits
" into the Soul, be not only ſo clear, as to ſcat-
" ter the Darkneſs that clouded the Mind; but
" *ſo penetrating*, as to ſtrike and pierce the Heart, and
" render it capable of a new Form and Frame: In
" order whereto, God, that at *firſt commanded the*
" *Light to ſhine out of Darkneſs*, is ſaid to have *ſhin'd*
" *into the Hearts*, (*viz.* of them whom he renews)
" *to give the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of*
" *God in the Face of Jeſus Chriſt*, 2 Cor. iv. 6.

He

He ſhines on the Heart, enlightens the Mind at the firſt Converſion; and further ſhines upon it afterwards by his Spirit: He *hath given us an Underſtanding*, ſays the Apoſtle, *that we may know him who is true*, 1 John v. 20. He not only gives us a Revelation of him, but *an Underſtanding to know him*: And this is what I am now adviſing you to ſeek and wait for *(viz.)* the ſpecial Illumination, Help, and Influence of the Spirit. I can't doubt but it belongs to the ſtated Office of the *Paraclete*, to aſſiſt the Members of the Church, in reading and interpreting the Chriſtian Revelation, and improving the Bible, and you ſhould depend on him for this Purpoſe. Beg his Preſence and Influence when you are going to read his Word, and intermix frequent Ejaculations with your reading. *Lord*, ſay you, *teach me to profit, ſeal Inſtruction; write thy Laws in my Heart by thy Spirit, cauſe thy Word to dwell richly in me*, &c.

If there be any, to whom ſuch a Strain of Diſcourſe is not grateful, I ſhall leave them to their own Apprehenſions; only deſire their Diſſent may be with more Modeſty than is uſual; and that they would not take upon them to preſcribe to, or cenſure others with the Air of Dictators. In the mean time, as I look upon this Doctrine to be of the utmoſt Importance, ſo I think it my Duty to aſſert it, and plead for it on all Occaſions. Take away the Influences of the holy Spirit from the Members of the Church, and the Chriſtian Religion, the Goſpel of Chriſt, will remain little elſe than a ſublime Speculation, a Syſtem of refin'd Morals, as ineffectual to change Hearts, and reform the World, as the Heathen Philoſophy. The holy Spirit, the *Paraclete*, is the *Shechinah*, as I may ſay, the Glory of the New Teſtament-Church: Learn to depend on him, on his Influence and

Grace in the whole of his Office; and let me add, the more entire and close your Dependence is, the better you are like to succeed in your Profession of Religion, and particularly in a devout Conversation with the Bible.

SECT. V.

Containing two Arguments for the reading and improving the Holy Scriptures in the Manner prescrib'd: (*viz.*) The Command of God, *and* Practice of the Church.

HAving shewn you in what Method, and with what Affection you are to converse with your Bible in your Retirement, and how to make the reading of the Scripture a profitable Part of divine Worship (in which I have said the more, because several things have occur'd a little out of the way, even of the more serious Christians Devotion, that are not sufficiently understood, and yet I apprehend of the greatest Consequence) I shall now, in the *second Place*, offer some Considerations to inforce this Duty upon you, (*viz.*) The diligent devout reading of the Bible in your Oratories. And,

1. Consider, for this Purpose, the *Command of God.* It was required of the *King* of *Israel*, that *he should write him a Copy of the Law in a Book; that it should be with him, and that he should read therein all the Days of his Life*, Deut. xvii. 18, 19. And the Reason upon which he was to do this, extends

extends the Duty further, and lays the Obligation upon all, *viz. That he might learn to fear the Lord his God.* All are concern'd to fear the Lord, and therefore are to read his Word, which teaches his Fear. And 'tis obſervable, that as he was to read in the Law, all the Days of his Life, ſo he's enjoined to *write* him a Copy of it; which the *Jews* ſay, was to be done with his own Hand, as a Means to fix it the more in his Mind. Some of the *Rabbies* add, that every private Man was bound to write himſelf a Copy of the Law; and if the *King* had done it whilſt a private Perſon, he was obliged to do it over again, when he came to the Throne. The ſame Charge is given, *Joſhua* i. 8. *This Book of the Law ſhall not depart out of thy Mouth, but thou ſhalt meditate therein Day and Night, that thou mayſt obſerve according to all that's written therein.* Nor were Rulers only, but the whole Body of the People oblig'd to read and ſtudy the Law: How expreſs that Injunction to the whole *Iſraeliſh* Nation, *Deut.* vi. 6, 7? *And theſe Words which I command thee this Day ſhall be in thy Heart, and thou ſhalt teach them diligently unto thy Children, and ſhalt talk of them when thou ſitteſt in thy Houſe, and when thou walkeſt by the way,* &c. They were to read the Words of the Law, learn and digeſt them themſelves, and teach them to others. It follows, v. 8, 9. *And thou ſhalt bind them for a* [f] *Sign upon thy*

[f] Whether this Precept is literally, or figuratively to be underſtood, has been diſputed among learned Men. The *Jews* take it literally, and hereon ground their Doctrine and Practice concerning their *Phylacteries*, &c. with all the Superſtitions referring thereto. Some Chriſtian Divines alſo contend for the literal Senſe: Dr. *Wotton* particularly, in his Diſcourſe of the Authority and Uſefulneſs of the *Miſnah*; where he

thy Hand, and they ſhall be as Frontlets between thine Eyes, and thou ſhalt write them upon the Poſts of thy Houſe, and upon thy Gates, (i. e.) be familiary converſant with them, lay them up in the *Heart and Soul*, as in a parallel Place, *Deut.* xi. 18. hold them before thy Eyes, and imprint them in thy Memory, ſo as never to forget them.

In the New Teſtament the Command is frequent: *Search the Scriptures*, ſays our Saviour, *John* v. 39. *They have Moſes and the Prophets*, ſays *Abraham* in the Parable of the rich Man (requeſting a Meſſenger might be ſent from the Dead to warn his Brethren) *let them hear them*, Luke xvi. 26. *(i. e.)* let them conſult their Writings; (for *Moſes* and the Prophets were dead long ſince) let

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he endeavours to prove, that the daily Recital of the *Schema* (as the *Jews* call it, *Hear, O Iſrael, the Lord our God is one Lord*) the Uſe of *Phylacteries*, and Schedules upon Gates and Door-Poſts, were required of the *Jews* in the Law of *Moſes*, and were no Invention of their own. Of the ſame Opinion is *Surenhuſius*, who has, with great Labour, collected the *Jewiſh Miſnah*, and given an entire Tranſlation of it in five Volumes in *Folio*. The Form and Manner of theſe Phylacteries, and of what Paſſages of Scripture they conſiſted, he gives a particular Account of, Part I. p. 9. but the whole ſavours ſo much of *Rabbinical Whim*, and makes them look ſo much like *Amulets*, that methinks 'tis not eaſy to believe they owe their Original to the divine Appointment (eſpecially in that Form of them). But the moſt, I think, of Chriſtian Writers, incline to the figurative and Metaphorical Senſe, which is ſufficient to my Purpoſe; as importing the Obligation the *Jews* were hereby laid under to a careful Peruſal and Study of their Law. Dr. *Patrick* takes it to be a Proverbial Speech; *Thou ſhalt bind them for a Sign upon thy Hand* (i. e.) carefully remember them: He obſerves, that juſt thus God commands them to preſerve the Memory of their Deliverance out of the Land of *Egypt*, and almoſt in the ſame Words, *Exod.* xiii. 9. 16.

them

them read the written Word, and learn the Doctrine of Salvation from thence. And we find the Apoſtle recommending the Scriptures to the *Epheſians*, as a moſt uſeful Piece of Armour: *Take the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God*, Eph. vi. 17. To the ſame Purpoſe, *Coloſſ.* iii. 16. *Let the Word of Chriſt dwell in you richly in all Wiſdom*; ἐνοικείτω: Let it be an Inhabitant in the Soul: not only ſtand in the Bible, but dwell in the Heart, and that copiouſly, and in great Abundance. Now conſider theſe Precepts, either as the Injunctions of a Sovereign, or the Advice of a Friend, they ought not to be neglected: 'Tis enough that ſo wiſe and kind a Being (one that knows and loves us better than we do our ſelves) recommends to us the diligent Study of his Word: We may conclude from hence 'tis our Intereſt. But he has Right to preſcribe to us; his Will ſignify'd makes our Duty, nor may we diſpute his Authority, tho' we knew not its Tendency to promote our Happineſs.

2. As this is God's Command, ſo it has been the Practice of the Church, both Jewiſh and Chriſtian, in all Ages: Good and devout Men have ever had a Veneration for the holy Scriptures; *I have eſteem'd the Words of thy Mouth*, ſays *Job*, *more than my neceſſary Food*, Chap. xxiii. 12. Such was his Value for a Revelation from Heaven! And yet how little was he favoured with, compared with our Bible? He lived in the Patriarchal Age, and probably had no Syſtem of written Laws; knew nothing of *Moſes* and the Prophets; had only (beſide the Law natural, written in the Heart) the Benefit of ſome Traditions from *Adam*, *Noah*, and others; and occaſional Revelations by Dreams, Viſions, *&c.* But he found the Neceſſity and Comfort of Inſtruction from above, and therefore moſt affectio-

affectionately embraces even the obſcurer Hints and Intimations that were afforded him.

It was the ſpecial Advantage of the *Jews*, that *to them were committed the Oracles of God*; and how they priz'd and us'd them, we need not be ignorant. *David* makes it the Character of the bleſſed and pious Man, *that his Delight is in the Law of the Lord, and that therein he meditates Day and Night*, Pſal. i. 2. And how much there was of this in his own Temper, he himſelf informs us. *The Statutes of the Lord*, ſays he, *are right, rejoicing the Heart; more to be deſired than Gold, yea than much fine Gold: Sweeter alſo than Hony and the Hony-comb*, Pſal. xix. 8, 10. *I have rejoiced in the way of thy Teſtimonies, as much as in all Riches*, Pſal. cxix. 14. *My Soul breaketh for the longing that it hath to thy Judgments at all times; thy Teſtimonies are alſo my Delight, and my Counſellors*, v. 20, 24. and v. 97. *O how love I thy Law! it is my Meditation all the Day.* And again, v. 103. *How ſweet are thy Words to my Taſte; yea ſweeter than Hony to my Mouth.* And in the ſame Strain he goes on through the Pſalm, which is moſtly employed upon the Subject, diſplaying the Excellency of God's Word, and his own Delight therein.

Nor was this only the Temper of their more eminent Saints, but reckon'd, in a great Meaſure, *eſſential to the Religion of a Jew*; inſomuch that their Children were train'd up in the Reading and Study of the Law from their very Infancy. As ſoon as they can ſpeak, ſays *Buxtorf*, the *Jewiſh* Children are taught to write ſome Sentences of Scripture: And one of their own Authors, mention'd by *Wagenſeil*, tells us, they begin with that Text, Deut. xxxiii. 4. *Moſes commanded us a Law, even the Inheritance of the Congregation of Jacob.* This every Father was bound to teach his Son, as ſoon

as

as he could ſpeak; deſigning hereby, 'tis likely, to inſtill a Veneration for the Law among their firſt Notions: The Law is our Inheritance, not the World, not *Canaan!* So that it was not altogether extraordinary, which we read of *Timothy*, *That from a Child he knew the holy Scriptures*; but a thing of common Attainment: And ſomething of the like Zeal for the Scriptures continued among them after their greateſt Apoſtacies in other Inſtances. "Ask one "of our Nation, ſaith *Joſephus*, concerning the Law, "he will tell you all things more readily than his own "Name; for learning them as ſoon as we come to "have any Knowledge of things, we preſerve them "deeply engraven on our Minds." To the like Purpoſe is that of *Ribera*, who tells us, "He was "acquainted with a *Jew* at *Salamanca*, of whom he "enquired about ſeveral things, both in the Hiſtorical and Prophetical Books of Scripture; but, "ſays he, he ſtopt me immediately upon the firſt "Mention of them, and repeated them all himſelf without Book in the *Hebrew* Tongue; "which I relating to another *Jew*, that was become Chriſtian, he told me it was no Wonder, "for they committed all theſe things to Memory "from their Childhood." Nay, ſo ſuperſtitious were they in this Affair, that they placed a ſort of Religion in numbering the Verſes, Words, and even Letters of every Book; which was the Province of the *Maſorets*, whence they had the Name of *Sopherim*, or Numberers.

2 Tim. iii. 15.

Patrick's *Search the Scripture.*

And how Matters ſtood in the Chriſtian Church with reference hereto, Hiſtory informs us: *Apollos* was *mighty in the Scriptures*, Acts xviii. 24. The *Beræans ſearched the Scriptures daily*, Acts xvii. 11. which, as it was a Means of bringing them to embrace Chriſtianity; ſo, no queſtion, 'twas their Practice afterwards. The primitive Confeſſors had

that Value for their Bible, that no Terrors could prevail with them to part with it, and reſign it to the Fury of their Enemies. They would give their Bodies to be burnt, rather than their ſacred Books, when demanded of them by the Heathen Perſecutors; which was a Trial we know they actually underwent: And thoſe that comply'd in the Hour of Temptation, were call'd *Traditores* (becauſe they deliver'd up their Bibles) a Name of the greateſt Infamy, and the Crime thought ſo heinous, that the guilty could ſcarce ever after be reſtored to the Peace of the Church. And ſurely they who preſerved their Bibles at ſo great a Hazard, muſt have had a conſiderable Value for them, and would not neglect them. 'Tis ſaid of *Tertullian*, that he was taken up Night and Day in reading the Scriptures, that he got much of them by Heart, and that ſo exactly, that he knew each Period. St. *Auſtin* tells us, that, after his Converſion, the Scriptures were the Matter of his moſt pure and chaſte Delight, in reſpect whereof all other Books (even his once admired *Cicero*) became dry and unſavoury to him. *Theodoſius* the younger could repeat any Part of the Scriptures exactly; and was wont to diſcourſe out of them, with the *Biſhops* that were at Court, as readily as if he had been an old Biſhop himſelf. St. *Jerom* ſays of *Origen*, that he never went to Meals, without ſome Part of Scripture read; never to ſleep, till ſome about him had read them to him. *Euſebius* ſays, he heard one, who had his Eyes burnt out in the *Diocleſian* Perſecution, repeat *memoriter* the Scriptures in a large Aſſembly, as if he had been reading out of a Book. St. *Jerom* tells of *Nepotian*, that, by daily Reading and Meditation, he had made his Soul a Library of Chriſt: And ſhould I deſcend to more modern Inſtances, how many might be found of

Vide *Cave's Pr. Chriſtianit.* P. I. 268, &c.

the like Temper? *Zuinglius* wrote out St. *Paul*'s Epiſtles and got them by Heart. *Beza* could repeat them in *Greek*, at fourſcore Years of Age, having learnt them in his Youth. 'Tis ſaid of *Cranmer* and *Ridley* (thoſe renown'd Martyrs) that they had got the New Teſtament by Heart, the one in his Journey to *Rome*, the other in the Walks of *Pembroke-Hall* in *Cambridge*.

And if theſe Examples be thought extraordinary, I might produce a Multitude of others more upon the common Level, enforcing the ſame Duty upon us. Some have read the Bible throughout above twenty times a Year, ſome ten times, ſome five, ſome three. That Ornament of his Age and Country, the Honourable Mr. *Robert Boyle*, after all the Reputation he had got by his Philoſophick Studies, and ſome Compoſures of Wit, profeſſes the Scriptures were his moſt honoured and beloved Subject. "I wou'd bring my ſelf, ſays he, to "prefer the leaſt Sprig of the Tree of Life to a "whole Wood of Bays; and am inclin'd to think, "that a Chriſtian may find a higher Satisfaction "in perſuading Men to pay Praiſes to the Scrip- "ture, than in receiving them from all the World "beſides." And ſo great was his Value for Scripture-Knowledge, that he took all Opportunities to enrich his mind with it. 'Tis ſaid of him, that if he met with any Hints in Converſation with his learned Friends, which he thought a good Illuſtration of a difficult Text of Scripture, he wou'd requeſt to have them in Writing. And the like Veneration for the ſacred Scriptures, the like Eſteem for them, and Delight in them, has been found in Hundreds and thouſands more; indeed in all the true and genuine Members of the Church, according to the Meaſure of their Attainments.

Epiſt. Dedic. before his Book *Of the Style of Script.*

And

And how much of Argument and Motive is there in this Conſideration? We are, you ſee, compaſs'd about with a great Cloud of Witneſſes, all bearing Teſtimony to the Dignity and Value of the Bible, and to the Pleaſure and Profit of converſing with it; and ſhall we not regard their Teſtimony, and receive the Inſtruction of it? The Examples of good Men, tho' not ſtrictly a Law, are a ſtanding Admonition to the Church, and recorded for that Purpoſe: *Take my Brethren the Prophets*, ſays the Apoſtle, *for an Example*, Jam. v. 10. *Be Followers of them*, ſays another Apoſtle, *who thro' Faith and Patience inherit the Promiſes*, Heb. vi. 12. And again, 1 *Cor.* iv. 16. *I beſeech you, be ye Followers of me.* There is indeed a ſort of an Authority in Eminent Examples: "Will you mention to me, ſays *Cicero*, the *Scipio's*, *Cato's*, and "*Lælius's*, and ſay that they did this or that? tho' "the thing diſpleaſes me, yet I cannot withſtand
Epiſt. II. "the Authority of ſuch Men." *Seneca* obſerves, that the Followers of *Socrates* learnt more from his Manners, than his Precepts: And behold greater than *Socrates* or *Cato* are here. The Chriſtian Church has greater Names, and brighter Examples, than any among the Pagan Moraliſts. Oh! let us pay a due Reſpect to them; let us obſerve and imitate thoſe that have gone before us in the way of Life: Their Practice, I grant, is not our Rule; but when it agrees ſo well with the Precept, it may and ſhou'd enforce it upon us.

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SECT. VI.

Other Arguments for reading the Scripture; as, the Excellency, the great Uſefulneſs of it: 'Tis one Way of ſolemn Worſhip; and a Means of delightful Intercourſe with God, &c.

3. CONſider the Excellency of Scripture, and let this invite you to a diligent *Peruſal* of it. Particularly *'tis the Word of God: All Scripture is given by Inſpiration of God*, 2 Tim. iii. 16. The Bible contains God's Oracles, *Rom.* iii. 2. which Character alone is ſufficient to recommend it. Writings, among Men, have their Eſteem and Value, very much from the Quality and Station of their Authors. A Letter from a great Perſon, how mean ſoever the Subject be, is generally priz'd. A Speech from an earthly Sovereign commands the Attention, even of a Kingdom: And ſhall a Book that has its [g] Original from Heaven, which claims God for

[g] That the Scriptures of the Old and New Teſtament are the Word of God, is an Article of Religion ſo important in itſelf, and ſo neceſſary to be known and believ'd, that it ought carefully to be enquired into. Indeed ſome Knowledge of this is preſuppos'd to the Method of converſing with the Bible, I am here adviſing to. Tho' the Bible be a Book of great Antiquity, and containing a Variety of excellent Learning; yet was it not a Revelation from God, in which we have a *ſpecial* Concern, nothing could entitle it to ſo much of our Time, Thought, and Study, as is, on that Conſi-

for its Author, have no Regard, or but little Regard from us!

Further, the Inſtruments employ'd in publiſhing and writing the Scripture, put a Value upon it:

Conſideration, due to it. I wou'd therefore earneſtly recommend to the Reader that he endeavour, for a thorough Conviction of this Truth founded upon proper Evidence. What that Evidence is, I can't pretend in this Diſcourſe to ſhew, but ſhall refer to ſuch Treatiſes as give it with greateſt Strength and Clearneſs. 'Tis certain, Mankind, in their preſent fallen State, need a Revelation from Heav'n, both concerning their Duty and Happineſs. We have abundant Reaſon to expect, that a merciful and good God wou'd herein condeſcend to Man's Infirmity and Neceſſity, and afford him a ſuitable Revelation. The Bible not only pretends to be a Revelation from God, but the greateſt Part of it has been receiv'd as ſuch, by as wiſe and great Men, as any in the World, and by large Bodies of them, for ſome Thouſands of Years; many of whom have profeſs'd its Doctrines, and embraced the Religion it preſcribes, at the Hazard and Expence of all that's dear to them; have laid down their Lives as a Teſtimony to the Truth of it. It is a Revelation every way worthy of God; has all the Internal Marks of Divinity, that can be deſired: It ſtands confirm'd by a Train of the moſt amazing Miracles, the broad Seal of Heaven. The ſeveral Parts of the Bible, as the Writings of *Moſes*, of the Prophets, and of the Evangeliſts, bear Teſtimony to each other, and ſupport one another's Authority. 'Tis not ſo precarious an Argument of Monſieur *Du Bois de la Ceur*, as it may ſeem. " If, ſays he, " there was ſuch a Man as *Moſes*, and if he was the Author " of the Books commonly attributed to him, then the *Jewiſh* " Religion is true, and the whole old Teſtament of divine " Original: if the *Jewiſh* Religion be true, then Jeſus Chriſt " is the Meſſiah; and if Chriſt be the Meſſiah, all he taught and " ſaid is to be believed: Therefore the whole New Teſtament " is true, and conſequently the whole Bible a Revelation from " God." The Writers of Scripture mutually receive from, and give Light and Authority to one another.

Divine Original of five Books of *Moſes*, p. 3.

I might ſubjoin, as a glorious Confirmation of the Truth and Divinity of Scripture (tho' this is not a Place to enlarge upon that Subject) that it has been fulfill'd in the conſtant Courſe

it: They were *holy Men,* and *moved by the Holy Ghoſt,* 2 Pet. i. 21. It was not peculiar to *Iſaiah,* that the Holy Ghoſt ſpake by him (he ſpake alſo by the reſt of the Prophets) *Acts* xxviii. 25. and beſides

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Courſe of Providence from the Beginning of the World to this Day. There's an admirable Harmony between the Word and Providence; ſo that the one ſeems to be nothing elſe but a regular acting over the other. The Scripture is the Plan or Scheme, as I may ſay, of the divine Government; Providence is the Counterpart thereof. For Inſtance, the Scripture has ſaid, that there ſhould be a regular Succeſſion of Night and Day, of Winter and Summer, of Seed-time and Harveſt; that the Earth ſhould be drown'd no more; and as a Pledge of God's Veracity, his Bow ſhould appear in the Clouds. All which we ſee accompliſh'd. The Scripture has told us what ſhould be the general State of the World, even to the End of Time; has deſcrib'd Events with great Exactneſs; ſuch as were wholly out of the Reach and Proſpect of any finite Underſtanding. It foretells, that the Poſterity of *Abraham* (the Children of *Iſrael*) ſhould go down into *Egypt,* and ſojourn there, in a State of Slavery and Affliction, for Four Hundred Years, and then be deliver'd; which was accompliſh'd to a Day. It deſcribes, by way of Prophecy, the Settlement of *Iſrael* in the promis'd Land; their prodigious Increaſe, the Condition of their ſeveral Tribes, their ſeveral Captivities, Deliverances, Revolutions and Changes; their general Diſperſion, as at this Day: Of all which the 28th of *Deuteronomy* is a ſort of an hiſtorical Map, delineating and repreſenting, in a lively manner, every Event (as the Reward of Obedience, and Puniſhment of Diſobedience) as if it had been wrote by ſome careful Obſervers, in ſucceſſive Ages, after the things there mention'd came to paſs. It deſcribes the Riſe and Fall of the four famous Monarchies of the World, the *Aſſyrian, Medo-Perſian, Grecian,* and *Roman;* and that in Order, with their diſtinct Periods: That greateſt Event of all, the Incarnation of the Son of God, is deſcrib'd, in the ſeveral Circumſtances of it, in a manner that is truly ſurprizing; as, that he ſhould be born of a *Virgin,* and is therefore call'd in the Prediction *the Seed of the Woman,* Gen. iii. 15 which was fulfill'd, in the very Letter, ſome Thouſand Years after, *Gal.* iv. 4. (cou'd this be from an uninſpired Pen?) It de-

beſides their Inſpiration, they have ſomething in their perſonal Character to recommend their Wri-

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ſcribes the Family he was to come of, the Time of his coming, his Life, Offices, Death, Reſurrection, Aſcenſion; the Oppoſition he was to meet with; the Succeſs of his Doctrine, and Eſtabliſhment of his Church; the Riſe of Antichriſt, the Progreſs of his Kingdom, I may add, the Fall and Ruine thereof; the State of the Church, and of Religion in its laſt Period; the Reſurrection of the Body, the final Judgment; moſt of which have been exactly accompliſh'd according to the Scripture Plan, and the reſt we wait for, and have here enſur'd.

As to particular Perſons, the Scripture anatomizes the very Heart, diſcovers inward Corruption in all its Workings; the general Method of God's Intercourſe with Believers, enlightning, convincing, comforting, *&c.* It relates their ſeveral Temptations, Fears, Dangers, with the Way and Means of their Deliverance and Safety; their ſpiritual Maladies and Diſtempers, with their Cauſe and Cure; the Comfort and Peace that's to be found in the way of Religion, and that followeth Obedience; the Diſtreſs, Terror, Weakneſs, *&c.* that's the Fruit of Apoſtacy: In ſhort, the main Paſſages of the Chriſtian's Warfare, all the Varieties of his Caſe and Experience, are repreſented in the Scripture. So that Providence is really a Tranſcript of the Bible. What was ſaid of the Church, that 'tis *Chriſtus explicatus*, Chriſt unfolded, may be ſaid of Providence, that 'tis *Biblia explicata*, the Bible diſplay'd, the ſeveral Scenes there laid down regularly acted: So that I think I need not ſcruple to call this a Demonſtration, as ſtrong and ſenſible, as a Subject of this Nature is capable of, *that he who governs the World indited the Word.*

The Reader will excuſe this Digreſſion, which I thought not impertinent to my preſent Purpoſe: The more we are eſtabliſh'd in this great Truth (that the Bible is the Word of God) the better Chriſtians we are like to be, and the better we ſhall eſteem and improve the Bible; and I can't but recommend it, as a Matter of the laſt Importance to the Reader, that he would endeavour to build hereon a firm Foundation, and not take it (the Divinity of the Bible) for granted as a Tradition receiv'd from his Fathers, and a Truth generally admitted in the Country where he lives: Such a Faith, in other Places, would diſpoſe to embrace the *Trent* Creed, or *Alcoran*, inſtead of the Bible.

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tings. *Moſes* God knew Face to Face; *David* was a Man after God's own Heart; *Solomon* the wiſeſt of Men; *Daniel* a Perſon highly beloved; *John* the Favourite Diſciple of Chriſt; and the Apoſtle *Paul*, who wrote ſo great a Part of the New Teſtament, was caught up into the third Heavens. Theſe and ſuch like were the Penmen of Scripture; which methinks ſhould raiſe our Eſteem of it. What Veneration do we often pay to ancient Writings, that come to us under the Names and Authority of great Men, and Saints (as we affect to call them) tho' but weak and fallible Men at beſt, and have, it may be, little but their Antiquity to recommend them? But here are *Saints*, undoubted Saints, great and *inſpired* Saints; and ſhall we not treat their Writings with a ſuitable Regard?

I might add, under this Head, that there is an Honour put upon Scripture from the Intereſt the Son of God had in the Publication of it. *God has in theſe laſt Days ſpoken to us by his Son*, Heb. i. 2. What immediate Concern he had in promulging the Old Teſtament Laws, I ſhall not now enquire; but the New Teſtament is properly the Doctrine and Law of Chriſt; *it was begun to be ſpoke by the Lord himſelf*, Heb. ii. 3. was confirmed and further enlarged by ſuch as he commiſſion'd and inſpired; ſo that the whole is *the Word of Chriſt*, Col. iii. 16. And ſhall we not value and ſtudy a Book that comes originally from God, and is in a great meaſure publiſh'd by the Son of God incarnate? *O ſee that ye refuſe not*, neglect not, *him that ſpeaketh from Heaven.*

Nor is it the leaſt Argument of the Scripture's Excellency, *that it is true*; infallibly true, which gives it a Preference to all human Writings, *I will ſhew thee*, ſays the Angel to *Daniel*, *that which is noted in the Scripture of Truth*, Dan. x. 21. Its

Predictions and Prophecies are true, *Luke* xxiv. 44, 45, 46. Its Promiſes are true, 2 *Cor.* i. 20. and (which I would more particularly here take notice of) its Relations or Hiſtories are true, and have an Exactneſs in them above what common Writings can pretend to. It deſcribes not only the Actions of Men, but the Principles from whence they flow. It gives an Account of *Abel*'s Faith, and *Cain*'s Want of Faith in their Offerings; of *Noah*'s religious Fear, when he prepared the Ark; of *Moſes*'s Unbelief and Paſſion, when he ſmote the Rock; of the Envy of *Joſeph*'s Brethren; of *Pharaoh*'s Hardneſs of Heart; of *Sarah*'s Infidelity; of *Eſau*'s inward profane Temper; of *David*'s Pride, when he numbred the People, *&c.* And how valuable is the Scripture on this Account? (beſides the Evidence we have from hence of its Divinity.) There never was, and never will be, any true and *complete Hiſtory*, either of *England*, or any other Nation; or indeed, of any great Event, unleſs an inſpired Pen be employed in it. Other Hiſtories (ſuppoſing the Writer never ſo honeſt and impartial, according to his Light) can only give us the Fact in groſs, *the outward Action*, but cannot lay open the ſecret Springs, nor diſcloſe the inward Paſſions, that gave Riſe to all, and intermix'd with all. The Actions of Men ordinarily follow their Purpoſes and Reſolutions, and theſe very much follow the Affections and Paſſions; which, how they are ſtruck and mov'd, is often a Secret to the World, notwithſtanding the greateſt Events depend thereon: But theſe are, in many Inſtances, clearly diſplayed in the ſacred Hiſtory; whereby the Reader receives another ſort of Inſtruction and Admonition than he can have from other Writings. 'Tis the Glory of Scripture, that 'tis *the Word of Truth*, Jam. i. 18. on which Conſideration

ſideration we ſhould value it the more, read and ſtudy it with more Care, Diligence, and Affection.

Further, the Scripture contains the moſt excellent Subjects; the Matter of it is of the greateſt Importance; as, its Account of the Creation of the World, and Original of all things; in which it gives us more Satisfaction, in a ſhort Chapter or two, than all the Heathen Philoſophers have done in their numerous Writings; many of whom are ſo far from telling us *how* the World was made, that they believe it was *never made*, but was eternal. So its Account of Man's Apoſtacy, and the Origin of Evil (that puzzling Queſtion in the Pagan Divinity); its Account of a future State, the Certainty of another World, the chief Good and final Happineſs of Man; the Immortality of the Soul, the Nature of its Happineſs in the ſeparate State; theſe are Doctrines of the utmoſt Concernment to Religion, the very Baſis and Foundation thereof, and all of 'em *clearly* diſcover'd, and fully eſtabliſh'd in the Bible, *and there only*.

The Philoſophers indeed diſpute now and then about ſuch Subjects, but are ſadly bewilder'd in their Thoughts, and cannot come to any Certainty in them. The famous *Socrates*, it's known, was in Suſpenſe concerning the future Exiſtence of the Soul; and the great *Cicero* ſpeaks backward and forward, and, in general, expreſſes himſelf rather like one that *hop'd and deſir'd the Soul might* be immortal, than one *convinced* it was ſo. But the holy Scripture ſets us above all rational Doubt on theſe Heads: There *Life and Immortality is brought to Light*. *In my Father's Houſe*, ſays Chriſt, *are many Manſions*, John xiv. 2. And again, *Luke* xx. 36. ſpeaking of the Children of the Reſurrection, *Neither can they die* (ſaith he) *any more, for they are equal to the Angels:*

A Teſtimony of more Weight and Force, than all the fine Sayings of the Moraliſts put together.

And how admirable an Account does it give of the bleſſed God himſelf? Of his Nature, Attributes, Perfections; of the ſeveral Parts, and the manner of his Worſhip: How pure a Syſtem of divine Morality does it furniſh us with? directing us in every Duty and Office of Life; in every Relation and Circumſtance, taking us by the Hand, as it were, and leading us Step by Step in the way to Happineſs: exciting our Fears by its Terrors, our Hopes by its Promiſes, not only of future Glory, at the End of our Work, but by Promiſes of inward Aſſiſtance, whilſt in our Work.

I might add as another moſt important Subject peculiar to the Scripture *(viz.)* the Doctrine of the Mediator; *here*, and here *only*, we have an Account of the Great *Emmanuel*; of his Birth, Life, Death, Reſurrection, Aſcenſion; of his Offices; of his Spirit; the End of his Sufferings; the Atonement made thereby; and of the ſpecial Privileges the Church enjoys by his Means: Such as Juſtification, Adoption and Sanctification, *&c.* The two great Articles of all Religion, Pardon of Sin, and the Hopes of Heaven, are ſo entirely founded on Scripture-Revelation, that, where that is wanting, there is, there can be no ſufficient Certainty of either. Here are we inform'd, that *God is in Chriſt, reconciling the World unto himſelf, not imputing their Treſpaſſes unto them*, 2 Cor. v. 19. And here we are aſſur'd of a Recompence at the Reſurrection of the Juſt; Points which no Book in the World can give full Satisfaction in, that does not derive from the Bible. Indeed the Light of Nature may help us to infer, or rather conjecture, that God will reward good Men; that their Honeſty, Sobriety, Beneficence, and Charity, ſhall

not

not be overlook'd: But that Apoſtate Creatures, conſcious to themſelves of ſo much Guilt, ſhould expect *an eternal Reward*; that all their Iniquities ſhould be pardoned, and that God ſhould beſtow upon them a Crown of Life, *an exceeding eternal Weight of Glory*; the Knowledge of this is wholly owing to the Bible. Whatever Excellency may be ſuppos'd in the Virtues ſome value themſelves upon, they are far from meriting Heaven; nor can any Principle of natural Light aſſure them of Heaven as the Reward thereof. For ought they know, or can know, all their little imperfect Services are repayed, and more than repayed, by the Bounty of common Providence, in the preſent Life. So that 'tis from *the Bible only* that the great Doctrines and Subjects of Religion can be learnt. This gives the only Account of ſome, and the cleareſt Account of all of them. And ſhall we neglect a Book that's thus excellent, and thus inſtructive?

4. Conſider the great Uſefulneſs of the holy Scripture to all the Purpoſes of the Chriſtian's Life, and in all the Variety of his Caſe and Circumſtances: 'Tis *profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction*, &c. 2 Tim. iii. 16. 'Tis a compleat Rule of Faith, a perfect Directory for Practice: *Ye err, not knowing the Scriptures*, Matth. xxii. 29. It's *a Light to* the *Feet, and a Lamp to* the *Path*, Pſal. cxix. 105. 'Tis a Preſervative in time of Temptation, *Eph.* vi. 17. *Matth.* iv. 7. And againſt Sin, *Pſal.* cxix. 11. *I have hid thy Word in my Heart, that I might not ſin againſt thee.* Hereby is the Chriſtian warn'd, *Pſal.* xix. 11. and caution'd, *Pſal.* xvii. 4. *By the Word of thy Lips I have kept my ſelf from the Paths of the Deſtroyer.* Treaſure up the Word of God in your Minds, hide it in your Hearts, and you'll not ſo eaſily yield in time of Temptation, whilſt the Authority of the divine

A Teſtimony of more Weight and Force, than all the fine Sayings of the Moraliſts put together.

And how admirable an Account does it give of the bleſſed God himſelf? Of his Nature, Attributes, Perfections; of the ſeveral Parts, and the manner of his Worſhip: How pure a Syſtem of divine Morality does it furniſh us with? directing us in every Duty and Office of Life; in every Relation and Circumſtance, taking us by the Hand, as it were, and leading us Step by Step in the way to Happineſs: exciting our Fears by its Terrors, our Hopes by its Promiſes, not only of future Glory, at the End of our Work, but by Promiſes of inward Aſſiſtance, whilſt in our Work.

I might add as another moſt important Subject peculiar to the Scripture *(viz.)* the Doctrine of the Mediator; *here*, and here *only*, we have an Account of the Great *Emmanuel*; of his Birth, Life, Death, Reſurrection, Aſcenſion; of his Offices; of his Spirit; the End of his Sufferings; the Atonement made thereby; and of the ſpecial Privileges the Church enjoys by his Means: Such as Juſtification, Adoption and Sanctification, *&c.* The two great Articles of all Religion, Pardon of Sin, and the Hopes of Heaven, are ſo entirely founded on Scripture-Revelation, that, where that is wanting, there is, there can be no ſufficient Certainty of either. Here are we inform'd, that *God is in Chriſt, reconciling the World unto himſelf, not imputing their Treſpaſſes unto them*, 2 Cor. v. 19. And here we are aſſur'd of a Recompence at the Reſurrection of the Juſt; Points which no Book in the World can give full Satisfaction in, that does not derive from the Bible. Indeed the Light of Nature may help us to infer, or rather conjecture, that God will reward good Men; that their Honeſty, Sobriety, Beneficence, and Charity, ſhall

not

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Law ſtares you in the Face, and, like a drawn Sword, ſtands before your Eyes.

And then how great the Support the ſerious Chriſtian derives from hence in time of Adverſity? *Unleſs thy Law had been my Delight*, ſaith *David*, *I had periſh'd in my Affliction*, Pſal. cxix. 92. It affords you Examples of ſuffering Saints, highly inſtructive; it tells you of their Faith, Patience, Reſignation, and Compoſure in the ſharpeſt Trials and Conflicts; it ſets before you great and precious Promiſes, 2 *Pet.* i. 5. exactly ſuited, one or other of 'em, to your Caſe, whatever it be: It acquaints you with the Reaſon, Deſign, and Tendency of your troubleſom Exerciſes; that it's only, *if need be*, that you are in Heavineſs for a Seaſon; that tho' your Afflictions be not joyous, but grievous, they yield the peaceable Fruits of Righteouſneſs; that all *ſhall work for Good*, and work for you *a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory*. This, and a great deal more, the Scripture will inform you of, relating to your Afflictions. You here read of *the Patience of Job, and ſee the End of the Lord*, Jam. v. 11. and from all may collect Matter of the higheſt Support and Conſolation in all your Troubles.

I might ſubjoin, that the holy Scripture, and Delight therein, is the great Means of the Chriſtian's Fruitfulneſs, as the Pſalmiſt intimates, *Bleſſed is the Man whoſe Delight is in the Law of the Lord.* ——*He ſhall be like a Tree planted by the Rivers of Water, which brings forth his Fruit in Seaſon*, Pſal. i. 1, 2, 3. What a Brook, or Canal of Water is to a Tree planted on its Banks, that is the Law of God to the Believer; he derives refreſhing Streams from thence. *I will never forget thy Precepts*, (ſaith that devout Man) *for with them thou haſt quickened me*, Pſal. cxix. 93.

Once

Once more, let it be conſidered, that the holy Scripture is the Vehicle, as I may call it, of the Spirit; it not only reveals, but gives the Spirit, *i. e.* is one Means by which 'tis given, at firſt given, *Gal.* iii 2. *Ye received the Spirit by the hearing of Faith*, (or by the Goſpel); and given in greater Meaſures. The Spirit accompanies the Word, and affords Conviction, Light, and Influence, and further Meaſures thereof to the Believer, whilſt he's ſeriouſly converſant therewith. Not but that a Man may find himſelf inſtructed and admoniſhed in reading *Seneca*, *Antonine*, *Epictetus*, *Plutarch*, and others of the more refin'd Moraliſts; but as the *Bible* carries divine Morality higher (without any of the *Errata* and Alloys, that are mix'd with their Rules) ſo there's a divine Energy and Power attending the Study of it, which is peculiar to itſelf: And indeed this is one of the chief Glories of our Bible. I grant, that if we only conſider it as an external Revelation, it exceeds all other Writings in the World: But here is its great Diſtinction; in this conſiſts an eminent Part of its Uſefulneſs and Comfort, *that 'tis the Word and Doctrine of the Spirit*; which the Spirit eminently owns by his gracious Communications; gradually enlightning, purifying, transforming the Chriſtian; impreſſing the Mind, writing the Law in the Heart, and changing him into the divine *Image from Glory to Glory*, 2 Cor. iii. 18. Well, theſe and ſuch like are the Purpoſes the Scriptures ſerve for; theſe are among the Advantages you may reap by a diligent and devout Converſation with them. Oh! be not ſuch Enemies to your ſelves, as to caſt by this ſacred Book. Let not the Duſt on your Bibles witneſs to your Neglect and Contempt of them.

There are many high Encomiums the ancient Writers of the Church have beſtowed upon the holy Scrip-

Hom. on Col. iii. 16. Scriptures: *Chryſoſtom* calls them the Medicine of the Soul (τ῀ ψυχῆς φάρμακα) a Repoſitory of ſpiritual Remedies, the Chriſtian's Conſolation in all his Troubles, his Armour, his Weapons; adding, "What Food is to the Body, that the reading of "the Scripture is to the Soul: 'Tis ſpiritual Nouriſhment, and renders the Soul ſtronger, more "conſtant and Philoſophical; not ſuffering it to "be carried away with abſurd Imaginations, but "making it pure and lightſome, gives it Wings "to carry it up to Heaven."——and elſewhere, "Great is the Good of Skill in the divine Writings; this makes a Philoſophical Soul; this forms "a Man to be acceptable; this makes him mind "not things preſent, but to fix his Thoughts on "the other World and Life." And in one of his Sermons on *Matth.* he calls it "a quiet Haven, an "impregnable Wall, a Tower that can't be ſhaken; "an Armour ſtrong and untouch'd, Glory that can't "be loſt, continual Joy and Delight." He adds, "Whatever can be thought of, amiable, and any "way good, Commerce with the holy Scriptures "will afford all that." *Iſidore* calls it, Scales by which we may aſcend to God *Auſtin* calls it a Fountain of Salvation from whence we fetch Remedies againſt our Paſſions, and expreſſing his Preference of it to all other Writings, ſays, *Auferantur de medio chartæ noſtræ*, &c. "Take away our Books, "let the Book of God be brought forth, hear "Chriſt, hear the Truth ſpeaking." And a Multitude of Paſſages in the ſame Strain might be recited; but 'tis needleſs after what has been ſaid: And indeed the Apoſtle comprehends all in theſe Words, 2 *Tim.* iii. 15, 17. *That the holy Scriptures are able to make wiſe to Salvation, to make the Man of God perfect, thorowly furniſhed to every good Work.* Oh Chriſtians! attend your Duty and Intereſt:

Prolegom. in Pſal.

Enarrat. in Pſal. lvii.

Bleſſed are they that delight in God's Law, Pſal. i. 2. *Bleſſed is he that readeth the Words of this Prophecy*, Revel. i. 3.

5. Let me offer another Argument *(viz.)* That the reading and converſing with the holy Scriptures in the manner preſcrib'd, is a Part of Worſhip that we owe to God, and a Means of ſpecial delightful Converſe with him. Hereby we pay an Homage to the bleſſed God, own his Authority, his Right to give Laws, and our Subjection to him. When you take the Bible into your Hands to read (with a Temper that ſuits Devotion) you do, as it were ſay, *Lord, thou art our King, thou art our Lawgiver; theſe are thy Edicts, thy Commands, which I receive and embrace as the great Standard of my Religion, the Rule of my Thoughts, Words and Actions: I am now at thy Foot to hear what God the Lord will ſpeak:* And then as you expect internal Teaching, Heart-Impreſſions (as you may and ought) in and by the reading of the Word, there's an inward and moſt profound Worſhip offer'd to God therein. You acknowledge him Sovereign of the Heart, Guide and Director of the Mind, perfectly acquainted with your Frame, your Thoughts, Affections, *&c.* all which you ſubject to him, waiting for the healing, rectifying, ſanctifying Influences of his Spirit, by the Word. And how acceptable a Service muſt this be? How pleaſing to God, as well as profitable to your ſelves?

And 'tis a Means (as I hinted) of the moſt grateful Intercourſe with God: This many devout Chriſtians have experienc'd; their Hearts have ſometimes burnt within them, while they have been ſearching the Scriptures, reflecting, meditating on them, and improving them (in the way mentioned.) Here God and the Soul ſpeak together; God ſpeaks in the Word, and the Soul, in the

the Exerciſe of ſuitable Graces, ſpeaks to God; as, Faith, Sorrow, Reſentment, Complaint againſt itſelf, Deſire, Reſignation, Love, Praiſe, Gratitude, *&c.* And how delightful a Work is this! It gives an heavenly Tincture to the Mind, excites ſpiritual Paſſions, and ſpreads a divine Solace and Pleaſure thro' the Faculties. Try the Method I am adviſing to, and you'll find it ſo; no doubt, the exceeding Satisfaction and Entertainment the *Pſalmiſt* met with in God's Statutes, were, *in part*, owing to this. They are truly excellent, I grant, and delectable, as they contain an Hiſtory of paſt things, Predictions and Promiſes of future things, and as they are a perfect Rule of holy Living. But the Sweetneſs and Solace he found in them, did, I preſume, reſult in ſome Meaſure, from the Intercourſe and Communion he had with God by means thereof. Hence they were his *Songs in the Houſe of* his *Pilgrimage*; his *Heritage for ever*: *the rejoicing of* his *Heart*, Pſal. cxix. 54, 111. *More to be deſired than Gold, yea than much fine Gold; ſweeter than the Honey, or the Honey-comb*, Pſal. xix. 10. And could we converſe with them with *David*'s Spirit and Temper, we ſhould experience the ſame in them he did. I'll only add,

6. Which was touch'd before on another Head, and for another Purpoſe, that the Spirit of God lays ſo great Streſs upon this, *that he diſtinguiſhes Men by their Regard to, or Neglect of the Scriptures.* Hence he fetches his Characteriſticks of good and bad Men. How plainly is this imply'd in the firſt Pſalm? *Bleſſed is the Man who walketh not in the Counſel of the Ungodly*, &c. *but his Delight is in the Law of the Lord*, &c. ver. 1, 2. where he deſcribes the Pious, the Godly, the Bleſſed, by their Delight in God's Law; and adds v. 4 *The Ungodly are not ſo:* (i. e.) they are not bleſſed as the Godly

Godly are; nor do they delight in the divine Law as the Godly do. So that there are two ſorts of Perſons diſtinguiſhed by moſt eſſential Characters; the one make the Law of God their Rule, their Study, their Counſel and Delight; the other walk in Counſels of their own, in the ways of their Heart, and in the Sight of their Eyes; and as for God's *Judgments, they are far above, out of their Sight*, Pſal. x. 5. They live without God and his Law in the World. And can there be a greater Argument to love and delight in the holy Scriptures? 'Tis, you ſee, the Property and Character of a Saint, and the Neglect of it the Mark of a Reprobate; thoſe worthleſs Creatures, that Chaff the Wind driveth away, and which ſhall be burnt up with unquenchable Fire!

And thus I have ſet before you ſeveral Arguments to enforce the Exhortation I have given to a ſerious devout Converſe with the Word of God in your Oratories. Don't deſpiſe what has been ſaid; don't omit ſo great, ſo neceſſary and important a Duty any longer. If hitherto you have neglected it, now addreſs your ſelves to it; reſolve henceforward to eſteem and uſe your Bible more, and allow it a Place in your conſtant daily ſecret Worſhip. Say not this is the Buſineſs of Divines and Secluſes (Perſons ſequeſter'd from the World;) 'tis the Buſineſs of all Chriſtians, of every one that has a due Regard to the Safety and Proſperity of his immortal Soul. *Let the Word of God dwell richly in you*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *Col.* iii. 16. which Exhortation he directs to Chriſtians in common. "Hearken to this (ſaith an eminent Father, "in a Diſcourſe upon the Text) ὅσοι ἐσὲ κοσμικοὶ, "πάντες οἱ βιωτικοὶ, as many as are Men of "the World, ſecular Men, and have Wives and "Children under your Care; obſerve how he *Chryſoſtom.*

" commands, *even you especially,* to read the Scrip-
" tures, and that not by the bye, but with a great
" deal of Diligence." And elsewhere he give a Reason why the reading of the Scriptures *is more necessary for them,* than even for retired Ecclesiasticks. " They that live in the World, says he, being " most exposed to the Danger of being wounded " (*i. e.* injur'd in their Minds and Frame) have " most need of Medicines." Don't, Christians, distinguish away, and shift off from your selves a Duty which so nearly concerns you, and which you should look upon as your Privilege, as really it is. God hath shewn you his Word, his Statutes, and his Judgments; he hath not dealt so with every Nation, praise ye the Lord: Be thankful for this greatest of Favours, and make suitable Improvement of the Goodness of God herein.

What would such a Man, as the Accounts we have of *Socrates* represent him to have been, have given for a Book of so much Wisdom, and divine Philosophy, as the *Bible?* And shall Christians, that have it in their Hands, and that with all manner of Advantage for the understanding it, set light by it? Lay it aside, as a useless thing! And in the mean time (which is too common a Case) prefer the sorriest Trash, a Romance, a Play-Book, or other impure Novel to it! How many seem to be of the Wretch's Mind, that profanely declared, *He found more Sweetness in one of* Pindar's *Odes, than in all* Paul's *Epistles.* Common Civility indeed may restrain them from expressing, in Words, such Indecencies and Rudeness in a Christian Country; but their Conduct gives broad Hints they have not a much better Taste of things. You may visit the Closets of some pretending to Wit and Learning (I have Reason for what I say) and find neither *Bible,* or any Book upon the Scripture there.

Homer,

Homer, Juvenal, Ovid, and other licentious Poets, are all the Saints they converſe with; and theſe, you'll ſee in the exacteſt Order, ſhining in all the Ornaments Art can enrich them with; whilſt the Oracles of Heaven are quite juſtled out, out of the Heart, the Houſe, and trampled under Foot! *But, bleſſed Lord! there are chaſter Breaſts, more divine Souls, all don't thus deſpiſe the ineſtimable Treaſure of thy Word. Let not thy Kingdom, thy Law, thy Goſpel be taken from us; that it may be given to a Nation bringing forth the Fruits thereof.* But I muſt check my ſelf. Reader, I have ſomewhat largely ſet before thee a Duty of exceeding moment; and do here call upon thee, as thou regardeſt thy Allegiance to the great Sovereign and Law-giver of the Church; as thou tendereſt the Favour, the Peace and Comfort of a pure Heart, and upright Conſcience, not to neglect it. Oh! caſt not God's Laws behind thy Back; read, ſtudy, love, and live thy Bible!

SECT. VII.

Of Meditation. The Duty deſcrib'd. Subjects proper for Meditation. Of more ſet and ſolemn Meditation.

2. I Now proceed to another Part of the Work and Duty of Retirement (*viz.*) *Meditation*, which the reading the Scripture may both diſpoſe you to, and aſſiſt you in. As to its Nature (to give you a ſort of a Deſcription of it) *'Tis a fixed ſolemn Survey, or Conſideration of ſome or other Sub-*

jects

ject of Religion, in order to raiſe the Affections, form pious Reſolutions, improve the Mind, and converſe with God: Where you ſee, I ſuppoſe, a particular Subject choſen, and this *a divine Subject*; ſomething that concerns Religion, or may at leaſt be improved to a religious Purpoſe: By which I diſtinguiſh this kind of Meditation from thinking or reflecting on common things, in a common way; as, upon ſecular Buſineſs, Arts, Sciences, News, *&c.* I add, 'tis *A fixed ſolemn Conſideration of a* Subject; in which it differs from more *ſlight and tranſient thinking*, even upon divine Matters: 'Tis a deſign'd cloſe Examination of this or that Argument, or Text, ſearching into its Meaning; laying open the Treaſures of Truth contain'd in it; making Application of all to our ſelves, by way of Admonition, Reproof, Exhortation; mixing ſpiritual Affections therewith, as Sorrow, Repentance, Self-Indignation, Love, Joy, *&c.* endeavouring by all to carry on ſome Intercourſe with Heaven. This is the Exerciſe I am recommending to you; concerning which let me propoſe a few things.

1. That this kind of Meditation is not a Matter of pure Indifferency, or a Free-will-offering; which may be expected from the Zeal of more eminent Chriſtians, but may be omitted without Guilt or Loſs: But it muſt be conſider'd, with reſpect to many, *as a Duty*, and what we are under great Obligations to. Something of it ſeems implied in that Precept to the Children of *Iſrael*, Deut. xi. 18. *Therefore ſhall ye lay up theſe my Words in your Heart, and in your Soul, and bind them for a Sign upon your Hand, that they may be as* Frontlets *between your Eyes: (i. e.)* they were to read them, digeſt them, conſider them, ruminate and deſcant upon them, revolving them in their Minds, and converſing with them on all Occaſions. All this

this the Prophet may import, and conſequently includes *Meditation.* And yet more expreſs to our Purpoſe is the Command, *John* i. 8 *This Book of the Law ſhall not depart out of thy Mouth, but thou ſhalt meditate therein Day and Night, that thou mayeſt obſerve and do according to all that's written therein; for then thou ſhalt make thy way proſperous, and then thou ſhalt have good Succeſs:* Which certainly muſt intend more than a bare Reading, how frequent ſoever. *Thou ſhalt meditate therein Day and Night, that thou mayeſt obſerve and do.* We are to fix the Mind upon God's Law, in order to form the Heart, and regulate the Life thereby. So *Pſal.* iv. 4. *Stand in awe, and ſin not, commune with your Heart, upon your Bed, and be ſtill, Selah:* *Upon your Bed,* or in your Bed-chamber, as the *Hebrew* Word *(Miſhcab)* may be rendered *(i. e.)* in your Oratory or Cloſet; which may not improperly be referred to the Employment we are now ſpeaking of. And thus we may take that of the Apoſtle, *Col.* iii. 16. *Let the Word of Chriſt dwell in you richly in all Wiſdom, teaching and admoniſhing one another,* &c. or *your own ſelves* (ἑαυτοὺς, *voſmet-ipſos,* as the vulgar *Latin* renders it) which, as 'tis agreeable to the Original, ſo it cannot be thought impertinent in this Place; and conſequently may be underſtood as an expreſs Command for Meditation. We are to lay up the Word of Chriſt, furniſh our Minds with it, and then apply it to our own Hearts, by way of Inſtruction, Admonition, *&c.*

And the ſame is recommended to us, by the Examples of good Men recorded in Scripture. *Iſaac went out to meditate in the Even-tide,* Gen. xxiv. 63. a Practice that, probably, he had been train'd up in, by the religious Care of his Father *Abraham,* as Part of that *Way of the Lord* he would command his Houſhold to keep, *Gen.* xviii. 19. And how

frequently do we find the devout *David* thus employed? Sometimes he meditated on the Word of God, *Pſal.* cxix. 15, 23, 48, 78. Sometimes on the Works of God, *Pſal.* lxxvii. 12.——cxliii. 5. On the Works of Nature, *Pſal.* civ. On the Works of Providence, *Pſal.* cxliii. 5. Sometimes on God himſelf, *Pſal.* lxiii. 6.—civ. 24. Nor did he only now and then glance at ſuch Subjects, think on them occaſionally; but addreſs'd himſelf to the Work with Zeal and Solemnity. *Mine Eyes prevent the Night-Watches,* ſaith he, *that I might meditate on thy Word,* Pſal. cxix. 148. *I remember thee upon my Bed, and meditate on thee in the Night-Watches,* Pſal. lxiii. 6. And again, *Pſal.* cxix. 97. *O! how love I thy Law it is my Meditation all the Day.*

I might urge the greateſt Example of all to confirm this Duty, *(viz.) that of the Lord Jeſus.* I before obſerv'd, he retired not only for Prayer, but Meditation; of which the Scripture gives ſeveral Hints, tho' we have not the particular Inſtances of his Meditations: For there were many more things that Jeſus did (by way of Devotion, no queſtion, as well as Miracle) which are not written in the Goſpel-Hiſtory, *John* xxi. 25. "Chriſt, *Saints Reſt,* P. 715. "ſays Mr. *Baxter,* was us'd to a ſolitary Garden, "that even *Judas,* when he came to betray him, "knew where to find him, *John* xviii. 1, 2. And "tho' he took his Diſciples thither with him, yet "did he ſeparate himſelf from them for more ſe"cret Devotion, *Luke* xxii. 41. And tho' his Me"ditation be not directly nam'd, only his Prayer; "yet it is very clearly implied, *Matth.* xxvi. 38, "39. His Soul is firſt made ſorrowful, with the "bitter Meditation on his Death and Suffering; "and then he poureth it out in Prayer, *Mark* xiv. "24." So that we have both Precept, and Example

ample for this Exerciſe; it is what God has commanded, and what good Men have practis'd, which is ſufficient to place it in the Number of Duties, and ſhew our Obligations to it.

2. The Subjects proper for Meditation are exceeding many; enough to entertain and employ the Chriſtian through his whole Life. Any Text of the Bible that you know how ſuitably to improve, any Doctrine, or Article of Religion may be choſen for the Subject of your Meditation; as, the Exiſtence of God, the divine Attributes, (any, or all of them) the Works of Nature and Providence; the Certainty of Religion; the Vanity of the World; the Depravity of human Nature; the Grace of God in Redemption; the Perſon and Offices of Chriſt; his Incarnation, Example, Life, Death, Reſurrection, Aſcenſion, Interceſſion; the Offices of the Holy Spirit, enlightning, quickning, convincing, converting; the ſeveral Graces of the Chriſtian, as Faith, Repentance, Love to God, Meekneſs, Humility, Juſtice, Temperance, Charity; the Duties of our reſpective Relations, as Parents, Children, Husbands, Wives, *&c.* the Sins and Miſcarriages of our Thoughts, Words and Actions; the Duties of the Cloſet, of the Family, of the Aſſembly, *&c.* the four laſt things, Death, Judgment, Heaven and Hell: Theſe, ſometimes one, ſometimes another of 'em, with a great Variety more, may be the Subjects of your Meditation.

And that you may not be at a Loſs, but always have your Text ready, I wou'd adviſe that you note down a Number of Subjects, as they occur to you, either in a diſtinct Book, kept for that Purpoſe, or in ſome Leaves of your *Diary*. If you meet with any Thing in reading, which may furniſh you with a ſuitable Subject, and ſupply

you with uſeful Hints in the Management of it; *have a Reference to it in your Paper*, that you may bring it into your Oratory, on Occaſion: And the like Aſſiſtance you may have from the Sermons you hear. Suppoſe you hear two or three a Week, one or other, it may be, each of theſe will give you a Text for your Cloſet: As if the Text in publick be, *Matth.* xvi. 19, 20. *Lay not up for your ſelves Treaſures on Earth*, &c. or v. 26. *What is a Man profited, if he ſhould gain the whole World, and loſe his own Soul?* Or *Rom.* viii. 1. *There is no Condemnation to them that are in Chriſt Jeſus, who walk not after the Fleſh, but after the Spirit.* When you return to your Cloſet, you may write down one or other, or all of theſe Texts, and make uſe of them in your Meditations, on proper Occaſions; in which the Sermon will ordinarily aſſiſt you, both with reſpect to Matter and Method. And let me add, that did you hear Sermons with this Deſign and View, you wou'd hear with more Attention, Care, and Diligence; and with more Advantage to your ſelves than is common.

3. The Meditation I intend (upon any of theſe divine Subjects) *is a ſet ſolemn thing*, in which it differs (as was in part hinted before) from occaſional Reflections; ſuch as one may have walking in the Street, or Field; when in the Shop, in Company, or Buſineſs. A ſpiritual Mind will be often ſallying out, and tranſiently ſaluting this or that divine Subject, even tho' it cannot ſtay upon it. But beſides this, there's a *more ſolemn* Meditation, when a Perſon addreſſes himſelf to the Work with Deſign, and carries it on for ſome time; and this is the Meditation I am now conſidering.

4. It may be allowable in your Meditations *to reflect upon a Variety of Subjects ſucceſſively, at one and the ſame time*; as on the four laſt Things, Death,

Judg-

Judgment, Heaven and Hell; or upon ſeveral Particulars of the Chapter you have laſt read; upon ſome Occurrences of the Day, and the like. And tho' this ſort of Meditation is leſs perfect, and ordinarily leſs profitable; yet to ſome it is more practicable, and what they can more eaſily attain to, than that which is confin'd to one Subject. Perſons of weak Heads, and little Invention, know not how to keep their Thoughts fixed for any time to one thing; nor can they find Matter, in a ſingle Subject, to ſupply a Meditation: In which Caſe this more unconfin'd Meditation may be indulg'd, nor is it without its Uſe. No doubt you may profitably go from one Subject to another, and take in ſeveral at once, beſtowing ſuch Reflections upon each, as readily and with Eaſe offer themſelves.

But 5. Ordinarily it will be beſt to fix upon a *particular* Subject, and keep to that, explaining and applying it as you are able; and, as was ſaid above, *let it be choſen before-hand*, that you may not ſpend that time in ſeeking your Text, which ſhould be employed in improving it. Having the Subject before you, proceed in your Work. Suppoſe, for Inſtance, Heaven be your Subject, you are firſt to conſider what Heaven is, enquire into the ſeveral Ingredients of its Happineſs *(viz.)* as a State of Deliverance and Freedom from Sorrow and Suffering, from Sin and Imperfection, *Rev.* xxi. 4. *Heb.* xii. 23. as a State of Reſt, *Rev.* xiv. 13, *&c.* Next repreſent to your ſelves ſuch Arguments and Conſiderations as prove that there is ſuch a State, Arguments taken from Reaſon, and from Scripture; and then bring all Home by a particular and cloſe Application; which indeed you will be naturally led to, by the Courſe and Tenor of your Meditation. And thus you are to proceed upon other Subjects (but I ſhall afterwards lay before you

more complete Examples and Specimens for your Aſſiſtance.)

6. Beſides thoſe that are choſen and known, *occaſional* Subjects will ſometimes offer, and ſhou'd take place of others, as Circumſtances may recommend them; the Scripture you read will frequently ſuggeſt a Text for your Meditation. So, at Night, the Occurrences of the Day paſt; what you meet with in Converſation; any remarkable Providence of God toward your ſelves, your Family, your Neighbours; theſe will afford proper Matter for ſerious Reflection; and it will be beſt to attend to ſuch Subjects, as being moſt ſeaſonable and inſtructive *at that time*. As when the Providence of God preſents you with a notable Example of the Vanity of the World, not only when Riches *make themſelves Wings, and* ſuddenly *fly away*, but when the true Enjoyment is loſt (which is a very common Caſe) but when you obſerve Men of an aſpiring ambitious Spirit, that love to make a Buſtle in the World, *that lay Houſe to Houſe, and join Field to Field* as if they would be placed alone in the midſt of the Earth; how they diſquiet themſelves in vain; what Snares and Temptations ſurround them; how much plung'd in the Dirt, and loaded with thick Clay, *ſo that they cannot look up*; have no Senſe of God and Religion, no Savour and Reliſh of heavenly things, but are utterly loſt to all that's virtuous, wiſe and good: This may lead your Thoughts to a moſt uſeful Meditation.

So when you have a remarkable Inſtance of human Frailty, in the ſudden ſurprizing Death of any of your Neighbours, and Acquaintance. Laſt Week, ſay you, I was worſhipping in the ſame Place with ſuch a one, or was converſing with him in ſuch a Company; and now, *in three or four Days Sickneſs*, he is ſnatch'd away, and gone into Eternity.

Such

Such a Providence as this ſhould not be overlook'd, we ſhou'd carry it with us into our Oratories, make it our Text, and beſtow a few devout Reflections upon it. And if the Perſon was young, juſt entering upon the World, forming to himſelf pleaſing Proſpects, or purſuing his Gratifications with full Career; that Circumſtance will not want its Inſtruction. 'Tis ſaid of a Merchant, that talking with his Friend, who fell down dead before him; he immediately upon it retired, and conſidered it to ſo good Purpoſe, that it became the Means of his Converſion.

If you are caſt into the Company of *vile Perſons*, as the Pſalmiſt calls ſome, *Pſal.* xv. 4. Such Fools as make a Mock of Sin, that ſit in the Chair of the Scornful, that toſs about Damnation in their profane Mouths; or if they have not arriv'd to this Pitch of Wickedneſs, yet ſwell with Pride and Vanity, are earthly and ſenſual: Even hence you may find Matter for a profitable Meditation, repreſenting to your ſelves the Wiſdom of *Solomon*'s Advice, *Prov.* i. 10, *If Sinners entice thee, conſent thou not.* And of the Pſalmiſt's Practice, and Reſolution; *I have not ſat with vain Perſons, neither will I go in with Diſſemblers. I have hated the Congregation of evil Doers, and will not ſit with the wicked,* Pſal. xxvi. 4, 5. exciting your Gratitude for that Grace which has made you to differ; rejoicing in your more happy Circumſtances, and infinitely more deſirable State, even tho' in a Shade of outward Meanneſs and Contempt, and begging God wou'd not gather your Soul with Sinners. Indeed a great deal of that Spiritual-mindedneſs, that divine heavenly Frame and Temper we ſhould endeavour after lies here *(viz.) in obſerving and improving daily Occurrences, and converſing with God in the Variety of his Providences.* And if we could

bring them (many of them) into our Cloſets, and ſeriouſly preach from them to our own Souls; it would be of no ſmall Uſe to us.

7. This Meditation may ſometimes *be more ſolemn*, carried on to a greater Length, and managed with greater Skill and Labour. Beſides what's done in the ordinary ſtated Courſe of your Cloſet-Religion, it will be adviſable now and then to ſet about this Duty with more Serioufneſs and Solemnity; as when *the North Wind awakes, and the South Wind blows upon your Garden*; when in the moſt devout Frame, and your Souls make you like the Chariots of *Ammi-nadab*; on the Lord's Day Evening, we will ſuppoſe, on a Sacrament-Day, after ſome awakening Providence or Sermon. In a Word, whenever a Concurrence of Circumſtances render you moſt ſufficient, and beſt qualified for the Duty, and conſequently invite you to it. In the Affairs of the World Men have their *happy Seaſons*, and Opportunities of extraordinary Advantage; when they apply themſelves to their Buſineſs with more than common Diligence and Pains, they can abridge themſelves, as you may obſerve, not only of their Diverſion and Pleaſure, but of their Sleep and common Food (the Shop-keeper will ſtand on his Feet on a Market-day from Morning till Night, to receive a few Shillings and Pounds, and think a good Market a ſufficient Recompence for his Self-denial) and ſhall not the Chriſtian have his *favourable Seaſons, his Market-days*, as I may call 'em, for his Soul? When he exerts his Faculties, and makes his moſt vigorous Efforts towards Heaven; when he ſets himſelf apart for a more cloſe and ſtrict Intercourſe with God, ſeeking God with his *whole Heart*: And on theſe Occaſions, on theſe Days of more ſolemn Reli-

Religion, ſuch Meditation as I am here recommending, will be pertinent and ſuitable.

I'll only add, 8. That tho' the common Chriſtian ſhou'd not be ſolicitous, and over careful about Order and Method, which it cannot be ſuppos'd he's Maſter of; yet 'tis proper he ſhou'd *obſerve ſome Method*, and range his Thoughts in the beſt Manner he can; which is neceſſary both to prevent Confuſion, and alſo to aſſiſt the Affections. There is ſomething in the very Conſtitution of our Minds and Faculties, that makes *Method* naturally agreeable to us, even tho' we underſtand ſcarce any thing of the Rules and Laws of it, nor are able to diſcern when a Diſcourſe is irregular and immethodical, any otherwiſe than *by feeling it*; and therefore I can't but recommend it even to the unlearned, that, in ſuch Exerciſes as theſe, they wou'd endeavour to diſpoſe their Thoughts in the beſt Order they are able: They need not be ſcrupulous about it, and yet ſhould not be altogether careleſs.

As to Expreſſion and Style, leſs Regard is to be had to that; quaint Phraſes, meaſured Periods, *&c.* need be none of your Concern; for as they are of little Uſe, even in ſtudied Compoſures of this kind, ſo they can't be expected from ordinary Chriſtians, in ſuch Exerciſes: Tho' the more *rational and argumentative* the Meditation is, the greater the Advantage is like to be; and of this Nature I ſhall endeavour to make the Examples I have to offer, and which I ſhall now ſubjoin.

SECT. VIII.

Several Specimens and Examples of such Meditation, as has been deſcrib'd. Examples of the more ſolemn Meditation.

THIS Duty of divine Meditation being of exceeding Importance in the Chriſtian Life, and yet I am afraid little underſtood and practis'd by the Generality of Chriſtians, even ſuch as dare not neglect other Duties of the like Nature, as Reading and Prayer; I have thought it neceſſary more diſtinctly to conſider it. Something has been ſaid, both to prove it a Duty, and to explain the Nature of it; and that none may be diſcouraged from ſetting about it, on the account of their apprehended inability, and want of Skill for the Management of it: I ſhall, for their Aſſiſtance, propoſe ſome Examples of ſuch Meditations, as they are to employ themſelves in. And let the firſt Subject be *Death*, which may be conſidered either from a particular Text of Scripture, or without it. If you chuſe the former, that may be proper enough, *Heb.* ix. 27. *'Tis appointed for all Men once to die*; and having put up a few Petitions, you are to contrive and fix the Method, and ſo proceed.

A Meditation on DEATH.

The firſt Specimen.

HEre, ſay you, I ſhall 1. Conſider what Death is in it ſelf, and Conſequences. 2. That 'tis certain. 3. Take notice of ſome Circumſtances of it. 4. Apply all to my ſelf.

1. As

1. As to the firſt of theſe, *What Death is*, my Senſes in a great meaſure inform me, *that it is the Separation of Soul and Body*, which the Scripture alſo confirms; 'tis a breaking the Union between theſe two, ſo that they go different ways. *Eccleſ.* xii. 7. *Then ſhall the Duſt return to the Earth as it was, and the Spirit to God that gave it.* 'Tis a Diſſolution, *I deſire to depart*, or be diſſolv'd, Phil. i. 23.

Its Conſequences, with reſpect to the Body, are, the Privation or Loſs of Life, Senſe, Motion; it takes down *this Tabernacle*, 2 Cor. v. 1. leaves it a cold lifeleſs Lump, a loathſome Carcaſe. Let me *bury my dead out of my Sight*, ſays *Abraham* of his once beloved *Sarah*; ſo that now it lies rotting in the Duſt, *Gen.* xxiii. 4. *Sees Corruption*, Pſal. xlix. 9. and is prey'd upon by Worms: *After my Skin the Worms deſtroy this Body*, Job xix. 26. This Death does, this it will ſhortly do, with reſpect to my ſelf. This Body I am now ſo tender of, ſo careful about, that I pamper ſo much, will be the Food of Worms, will be *ſown in Corruption*. 'Tis indeed an admirable Structure, and diſcovers the exquiſite Wiſdom of its Author; *I am fearfully and wonderfully made*; but Death will mar all its Beauty.

As to the Soul, the Conſequences of it are its immediate Diſlodgment, its Departure from the Body, *Philip.* i. 23. At Death I ſhall *put off* this Body, ſhall uſe its Members, Organs and Inſtruments no more; ſhall ſee with theſe Eyes, hear with theſe Ears, ſpeak by this Tongue no more; nor ſhall I enjoy its Pleaſures, or taſte its Gratifications any more for ever. In this reſpect, *Poſt mortem nulla voluptas*, there's no Delight in the Grave; *Nunquam joca dabis*, thou ſhalt jeſt, ſport, *&c.* no more; as the dying *Emperor* ſaid to his departing Soul. Nor muſt I only quit the Body at Death,

but

but the whole World, and all its Enjoyments: *I ſhall behold Man no more with the Inhabitants of the World*, Iſa. xxxviii. 11. My Trade, Eſtate, Friends, Relations muſt be left; all my Projects, Thoughts, Contrivances, Studies, *&c.* will be over for ever: *For there is no Work, nor Device, nor Knowledge, nor Wiſdom in the Grave*, Eccleſ. ix. 10. All Employment, Civil or Religious, all Endeavours (that are in the Nature of Means, and concern Preparation) Death puts an End to. *The Grave cannot praiſe thee, they that go down into the Pit cannot hope for thy Truth. The living, the living ſhall praiſe thee, as I do this Day*, Iſai. xxxviii. 18, 19. And then at Death, as the Soul leaves this World and State, ſo it enters upon another, *a new State*, and very much *an unknown State*. Death carries us from a World of Bodies to a World of Spirits; changes the manner of our Acting; the Objects of our Enjoyments, and the Enjoyments themſelves. I muſt then part with this Body, but how ſhall I act out of it? How ſhall I ſee without an Eye? underſtand and reaſon without a Brain? love without an Heart? Lord, thou know'ſt! And as 'tis another, a new State, *ſo 'tis an eternal State*. After Death my Condition is fix'd; I muſt either be happy or miſerable, and that *fully and for ever*. When *Lazarus* died, he *was carried by Angels into Abraham's Boſom*, and *was comforted*, Luke xvi. 22, 25. *The rich Man died*, and the next we hear of him was, that *in Hell he lift up his Eyes, being tormented in Flames*, ver. 23, 24. Nor were the Comforts of the one, and Torments of the other, liable to any Change. No, *the Gulph is fixed*, their Portion eternal, ver. 26. And, O my Soul, how awful a thing is Dying! how ſurprizing the Change Death makes; and how much does it challenge thy Thoughts and Care!

But

But muſt I die, change States, and paſs into an unſeen, unknown World? Yes, this is certain, it is *appointed for all Men once to die. Duſt thou art, and unto Duſt thou ſhalt return,* Gen. iii. 19. Death indeed was not due to, and deſign'd for primitive uncorrupted Nature; and therefore is not properly *a Debt to Nature,* as it is often called. Had not Man ſinned, he would have been, *by the Favour of God,* immortal. I don't mean that he would have lived always on this Earth, but after ſuch a Time of Probation, Trial and Preparation, as divine Wiſdom had appointed, Colonies of the more excellent refined Souls wou'd, I ſuppoſe, have been tranſlated (without dying, and with their Bodies) into the Regions above. But Sin has brought the Curſe of Mortality upon the World, *Rom.* v. 12. *In Adam all die,* 1 Cor. xv. 21. *all* without Exception; the greateſt Monarch, as well as the pooreſt Peaſant: *Ye are Gods, but ſhall die like Men,* Pſal. lxxxii. 7. Death is *the Way of all the Earth,* Joſh. xxiii. 14. The Grave is the Houſe appointed for all Living; 'tis impoſſible to avoid the Stroke of it; none can *retain the Spirit* in Death, there is no Diſcharge in that War, *Eccleſ.* viii. 8. 2. The Certainty of Death.

But thou needeſt not, O my Soul! a Multitude of Arguments to prove what thy own Obſervation, and even Senſes may convince thee of. Doſt thou not obſerve, that one Generation comes, and another goes? and that thus it has been from the Beginning? Our Fathers, where are they? and the Prophets, do they live for ever? Thy own Father, who fourſcore Years ago was not, has been dead twenty or thirty Years. How many of thy Acquaintance, in the Neighbourhood, are dead and gone, within the Compaſs of thirty Years? Search the Regiſter of the Pariſh where thou liveſt, and 'tis not likely thou wilt find *one of thoſe now alive,*

that were baptiz'd an hundred Years ago. Nay, look through a Kingdom, through the Earth, and ask what are become of the Inhabitants thereof, that were acting their Part on the Stage of this World an hundred Years ſince; are they not all ſwept away, and paſs'd into Eternity? Yea, moſt of them forgotten, and the Places that knew them know them no more! *Thou ſeeſt*, oh my Soul! *that wiſe Men die, likewiſe the Fool and the brutiſh Perſon periſh*, Pſal. xlix. 10.

3. Some Circumſtances of Death.

Nor is it only certain that I muſt die, but I muſt *ſoon die*; Death is not, cannot be a great way off, tho' I attain to the Years of my Fathers, in the Houſe of their Pilgrimage. *Job* obſerves, when the Term of human Life was not ſo much reduced as now, that *Man who is born of a Woman is but of few Days*, Chap. xiv. 1. And the Pſalmiſt afterwards complains, that his *Days were but an Handbreadth*, Pſal. xxxix. 5. Our Life is *a Vapour, which appeareth for a little time, and vaniſheth away*, Jam. iv. 14. Nay, ſo inconſiderable, minute, and even nothing is our Exiſtence here, that we are compared to a *Sleep* or Dream, *Pſal.* xc. 5. and our whole Life confin'd within the narrow Limits of *a Day*. *In the Morning*, ſays he, *they are like Graſs which groweth up, in the Morning it flouriſheth and groweth up, in the Evening it is cut down and withereth*, ver. 6. O my Soul! conſider this, look a little before thee (and thou needſt not look far, thy Day, thy ſhort Day is ſpending, it will ſoon be Night) look forward, I ſay, and thou wilt find thy ſelf in the Arms of Death; a cold Sweat ſitting on thy languiſhing Body; thy Breath and Pulſe ceaſing, and the Soul taking its Flight. That Vapour of thy Life will ſoon vaniſh away. O believe what thou canſt not deny, and frequently repreſent this Scene and State of things to thy ſelf; place

place thy ſelf among the Dead, free among the Dead, like the Slain that lie in the Grave.

And as Death is near, ſo 'tis haſtening apace, *We are going to the Grave*, Eccleſ. ix. 10. And how conſtant, how quick the Motion? *My Days are ſwifter than a Weaver's Shuttle, than a Poſt, they flee away*, ſays *Job* Chap. vii. 6.——ix. 25. Nor do I know how near, how ſurprizing the Summons of Death may be; the Fool in the Parable was ſtruck in the midſt of his Security, in the very Moment of his ſenſual Triumph. *Soul*, ſays he, *thou haſt much Goods laid up for many Years, take thine Eaſe, eat, drink, and be merry*; and behold, like *Belſhazzar*, when carouſing in the conſecrated Veſſels of the Temple, the Fingers of a Man's Hand writing appear, *this Night*, ſays God, *thy Soul ſhall be required of thee*, Luke, xii. 19, 20. Oh how ſtartling a Meſſage, how amazing the Diſappointment! May this never be my Caſe, but may I watch, and pray always, that *that* Day come not upon me unawares. *My Soul, boaſt not thy ſelf of to-morrow*; for *thou knoweſt not what a Night may bring forth.* Talk not of going into ſuch a City, and continuing a Year, and getting Gain; for what is thy Life, 'tis even a Vapour!

I might obſerve, 'tis but *once* that I muſt die: 'Tis *appointed for all Men once to die*, Heb. ix. 27. *If a Man die, ſhall he live again*? No, *he lieth down, and riſeth not till the Heavens be no more*, Job xiv. 12. Thou haſt, O my Soul! but one Caſt for Eternity; if thou forgetteſt the Work and Errand of Life, and miſcarrieſt at Death, thou art loſt for ever. There is no *Tabula poſt naufragium*, no Plank to ſwim to Shore on, if thou art ſhipwreck'd here. *Now is the accepted Time, now is the Day of Salvation*; but there is no Work in the Grave, no Repentance after Death, or Return to Life. *Now, or never.*

A ſecond Meditation on DEATH.

The Application. AND now, O my Soul, review this momentous Subject, and receive Inſtruction from thence. Muſt I die, ſoon die (*i. e.*) muſt this Body be reduced to Duſt? This ſhould teach me how to eſteem and value it, *viz.* as a fading, falling, periſhing thing. *The earthly Houſe of this Tabernacle*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *ſhall be diſſolved*, 2 *Cor.* v. 1. *i. e.* taken down, pull'd to Pieces; alluding, ſome have thought, to the taking down the Tabernacle under the Law. Firſt, the moſt holy things were uncover'd and removed; ſo the Soul, that moſt divine Part of Man, the unſeen Inhabitant, *that Ark* in the Tabernacle, is firſt withdrawn. Then the Veils and Curtains were folded up, and thus the Skin and Fleſh is deſtroyed and eaten by Worms. And in the laſt Place, the Boards of the Tabernacle were disjointed and ſeparated; ſo the Sinews and Bones of the human Body are looſed and periſh. All which *Solomon* expreſſes in a Variety of elegant Phraſes, *Eccleſ.* xii. from the Beginning. This I ſhall ſhortly experience in my own Caſe, Death will diſſolve the Tabernacle, the curious Machine of the Body, extinguiſh the Lamp of Life, break the hidden Springs of Motion: the Hands ſhall act, the Foot move no more, the Lungs breathe, the Stomach digeſt, the Tongue ſpeak no more: It will utterly ſpoil the Features and Colours, deſtroy that Symmetry and Beauty, which is the great Idol of vain Minds. In ſhort, Death draweth the Pins, and then the whole Frame falls to Pieces. And why ſo much ado about an Houſe of Clay, a tottering Tabernacle, a poor Carcaſe, adorning, pampering, pleaſing it? O my Soul! conſider *'tis a vile Body*; ſo the Scripture calleth it,

Phil.

Phil. iii. 21. and ſo Death will make it; and let this moderate thy Affections to it.

Further. Muſt I die, and leave this Body rotting in the Grave, thus diſſolved? How little Account ſhou'd I make of thoſe Enjoyments which are *confin'd to the Body*, and entirely depend upon it? 'Tis obſervable, when *Solomon* had laid Mankind in the Duſt, he immediately repeateth the main Argument of his Book, *Vanity of Vanities, ſaith the Preacher, all is Vanity*, Eccleſ. xii. 7, 8. And indeed whatever Excellency there may be in theſe things, in themſelves, or we may imagine there is in them, they muſt needs be Vanity to dying Creatures. Riches, Honours, Beauty, the whole Circle of fleſhly Gratifications, are but Conveniences for a periſhing Body, and muſt periſh when the Body periſheth. Oh my Soul! look out of the Grave, out of the Duſt, upon the Pleaſures and Entertainments of the poor deluded Senſualiſt, and then pronounce concerning them: Say what they are, and never chuſe that for thy Happineſs, that terminates in the Body, and falleth with it.

Again, muſt I die, *i. e.* depart from this World, leave it and all its Enjoyments, certainly and ſoon leave it? 'Tis evident, it was never deſign'd to be my Portion, nor can I, without the extremeſt Folly, take up with it, and reſt in it as ſuch. Had it every thing elſe to recommend it, 'tis enough to cool my Affections to it, to ſully its Glory, and ſtrip it of all its Charms, *that 'tis ſo momentary*. It can be no Happineſs to me, was it a thouſand times more excellent and valuable than 'tis, who muſt die, nay, am *juſt ready to die, and leave it*. And oh my Soul! why ſhou'd I be fond of what I can't enjoy, and purſue a Shadow that's flying from me? 'Tis very inſtructive, that my great Lord and Maſter calls preſent things *another Man's*, 2 Pet. i. 15.

and diſtinguiſhes them from what's *our own*, Luke xvi. 12. which the Pſalmiſt's Words may ſerve for a Comment upon: *Be not afraid* (or diſturb'd, uneaſy) *when one is made rich, and the Glory of his Houſe is increas'd; for when he dieth, he ſhall carry nothing away; his Glory ſhall not deſcend after him*, Pſal. xlix. 16, 17. No, *he leaveth his Wealth to others*, ver. 10. And this is really the State of things with us; this is the Tenure of our Enjoyments. Remember, O my Soul! thou art paſſing thro' this World, and ſhalt ſoon paſs out of it; whatever I have 'tis not properly an Inheritance, I am only a Tenant *for Life*, and indeed *at Will:* When it ſhall pleaſe God to require my Soul of me, *whoſe* ſhall theſe things be I have provided? *Luke* xvi. 20. 'Tis certain, whoſeſoever they are, they are not *mine*, but paſs to others, *i. e. paſs thro' their Hands.* Oh! may I chiefly value and mind *my own things*, the true Riches, and love this World as one that's leaving it.

Further, muſt I die, leave the Body, and ſubſiſt without it, in a ſeparate State? Muſt I enter upon another, a different and new Life? It highly concerneth me *now to acquaint* my ſelf with the other After-ſtate; to abſtract from the Body, and live above it as far as I can; to begin that Life which is more ſuited to my own Nature, as a Spirit, *viz. the rational divine Life.* Was this my only Duration, there wou'd be ſome Reaſon for the Epicure's Conduct, *Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we die*, 1 Cor. xv. 32. Why ſhou'd they not make the beſt they can of this Life, who expect no other? But this is not my Caſe: Death is a Diſſolution, not a Deſtruction. I then *depart*, but am not extinct: I muſt live and exiſt even to everlaſting, when I have quitted the body; and this ſhou'd direct me how to live before-hand; particularly

cularly it ſhou'd teach me " To live without the " Body now as much as poſſibly I can; to have " but very little Commerce with Fleſh and Senſe; " to wean my ſelf from bodily Pleaſures, that " when I uſe them, it may be without Fondneſs, " and may let them alone without being uneaſy " for the want of them. A wiſe Man ſhould " thus reaſon with himſelf: If I grow ſo fond of " this Body, and the Pleaſures of it; if I can re- " liſh no other Pleaſures, if I value nothing elſe, " what ſhall I do when I leave this Body? for " bodily Pleaſures can laſt no longer than my Bo- " dy doth: And what ſhall I do in the next " World, when I ſhall be ſtript of the Body? " for whatever Covering I may have, I ſhall have " no Fleſh and Blood about me; and therefore all " the Pleaſures I value now, will then vaniſh like " a Dream; whatever Alteration Death will make " in the Temper and Diſpoſition of the Mind (as " to the Deſire of bodily Pleaſures) 'tis certain a " Man wholly ſunk into Fleſh and Senſe, is not " capable of living happily out of his Body, un- " leſs a new Scene of material and ſenſible Plea- " ſures could be found out to entertain him. His " very Soul is ſenſualiz'd, and therefore is uncapa- " ble of the Pleaſures of a ſpiritual Life." May I conſider this in time, and now be attempting, and eſſaying ſomething of the Life of the other World, of the ſeparate unbodied State! This Death, as 'tis a leaving the Body, admoniſhes me of. How wretched ſhall I be, if I can reliſh no Pleaſures but what are deriv'd through the Senſes of the Body, when I ſhall ſhortly have done with the Body for ever!

Sherlock on Death, 53.

Again, muſt I die, and but *once* die? Endeavour, oh my Soul! to make ſure Work for dying, and for Eternity, that I may die well, and not miſcarry

in that *laſt and great Change.* An Error here is fatal, and can't be corrected; conſequently the utmoſt Caution is due in order to avoid it. It was a good Anſwer to one, that ask'd why the *Lacedæmonians* were ſo ſlow in paſſing capital Judgments; why ſo many Examinations taken; ſo many Defences permitted to the Accuſed; and, after Conviction and Sentence, ſuch a Space of Time before execution; becauſe, ſaith he, *A Miſtake in the Caſe is incorrigible.* They may deſtroy the living, but cannot revive the dead; and thus 'tis in the Affair before me: When the Sentence of Death is paſt and executed, it can't be revers'd; my State is determin'd for ever. 'Tis appointed for all *once* to die, once and *but once:* They don't live again, have no further Opportunity to repent of what was ill done, or do what was undone. Help me therefore, O my God, to ſecure this main Point, this greateſt Point; to get ready for dying, dying with Safety and Comfort!

Plut. Apothegm.

The COMPLAINT.

AND oh my Soul! what Reaſon for Cenſure? How undue and irregular thy Regards to the Body? How much haſt thou indulg'd it? How quick thy Senſe and Reliſh of its Pleaſures and Gratifications? *i. e. The Pleaſures of a Brute.* How haſt thou been caring for the Body? making *Proviſion for the Fleſh to fulfil the Luſts thereof?* Bewail this, O my Soul, and take to thy ſelf the Shame that's due: *Wilt thou not bluſh, as it were, when among the Angels, to think how long thou once ſtoopedſt in the Drudgery of Senſe,* in ſerving divers Luſts and Pleaſures; how much thou debaſedſt thy rational Nature, and proſtitutedſt thy ſelf to ſordid impure Embraces!

And

And O! Wretch that I am, that I have purſu'd with ſo much Eagerneſs a periſhing World; a World I am juſt dying out of; That I ſhou'd ſo much cleave to its Enjoyments, when I can't but know they will ſhortly be to me as if they had never been. *The Time is ſhort: It remaineth,* ſaith the Apoſtle, *that they that have Wives, be as if they had none; and they that weep, as if they wept not; and they that rejoice, as if they rejoiced not; for the Faſhion of this World paſſeth away,* 1 Cor. vii. 30, 31. But how little of this Indifferency has there been in the Temper of my Mind, and Courſe of my Acting? Alas! how carnal, how earthly am I? How much ſold under Sin, and enſlav'd to Senſe? And in the mean time, how have I forgot my latter End, and put the evil Day far from me? I have rather talk'd and acted like one that dreams of an earthly Immortality, than like a Stranger on Earth; one that knoweth he has no continuing City, but is here to Day, and gone to-morrow. Oh may I receive proper Admonition from hence! Lord, help by thy Grace, forgive my Stupidity and Folly, and teach me henceforth *ſo to number my Days, that I may apply my Heart unto Wiſdom.*

A third Meditation on DEATH.

The RESOLUTION.

OH my Soul! change thy Meaſures, alter thy Courſe; act more conſiſtently with thy Condition in the preſent World, and thy Belief of what's to come. What! art thou dying, and going out of the Body, going into another State, a State of a quite different Nature, of different Action and Enjoyment? Reſolve upon a ſuitable Con-

duct; *particularly* reſolve to withdraw from the Body as far as thou canſt; to mortify the Fleſh with the Affections and Luſts thereof: This is neceſſary to prepare and fit thee for the Happineſs of an imbodied State. *Auſtin* ſuppoſed that ſuch as died with earthly ſenſual Deſires unmortified, retain'd thoſe Deſires in the other World, and felt the Uneaſineſs of them, which is the only *Purgatory* he could allow: But this won't, I preſume, be the Caſe of holy Souls; when the Houſe (the Body) is pull'd down, the Leproſy of Sin, with reſpect to them, will be perfectly cured. In the mean time, without ſome Progreſs in Mortification, no Heaven can be expected: *The pure in Heart* only *ſhall ſee God*, Matt. v. 8. And the greater the Purity and Mortification, the fuller the Enjoyment.

I wou'd *alſo* reſolve to eſteem this World more ſuitably to my Condition in it, and Relation to it; to conſider my ſelf as a Stranger, a Paſſenger, one that's leaving it, and accordingly wou'd govern my Affections to it, my Care and Concern about it. When *Chryſoſtom* was baniſh'd, and his Friend *Siriacus* lamented his Caſe, he writes back to him, and telleth him what his Senſe of the Matter was. "You *now begin*, ſaith he, to bewail my "Baniſhment, but I have done ſo *for a long time*; "for ſince I knew Heaven was my Country, I "have eſteem'd the whole Earth as a State of Ex-"ilement: *Conſtantinople*, from whence I am ex-"pell'd, is as far diſtant from Paradiſe, as the De-"ſart they ſend me to." And thus it is with me, this is my Condition; I am here a ſort of an Exile; *from Home:* Oh my Soul! look to thy own Country, transfer thy Treaſure thither, *ſet thy Affections on things above, and not on things on the Earth: Having Food and Raiment*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *therewith be content*, 1 Tim. vi. 8. And indeed

Bates four laſt things, 98.

indeed 'tis enough for one in my Circumſtances, that's leaving this World, and haſtening to Eternity. Reſolve never to ſeek great things for thy ſelf; ſuffer not the World to delude thee: If it begin to encroach, to inſinuate and appear with its Flatteries and Charms; let the Thoughts of Mortality ſhew its Nakedneſs and Vanity and throw it under Foot, where it ought always to be. What vaſt Preparations do ſome Men make for an earthly Happineſs? How reſtleſs their Projects! How boundleſs their Deſires! They pluck down their Barns, and build greater, as if they had Goods laid up, not only for many Years, but many Ages, or at leaſt were aiming at ſuch a Fund; and behold God ſmites their Gourd, and it withereth! Death arreſts them in the midſt of their Schemes, and in that very Hour their Thoughts periſh! Oh my Soul, conſider this, and learn Wiſdom and Caution; endeavour to live diſengag'd from the World: *If Riches increaſe, ſet not thy Heart upon them:* Buy as if thou poſſeſſedſt not; and, above all, beg, earneſtly beg God would ſave thee from the (Temper of the) Men of this World, who have their Portion in this Life.

I wou'd reſolve and endeavour a Meetneſs for the other State; for the Inheritance of the Saints in Light. Heaven muſt be begun here; the Foundation laid in the Diſpoſition and Frame of the Mind. An unſanctified Perſon could not reliſh Heaven, was he admitted thither, no more than a Swine a Conſort of Muſick, or the Society of Angels. Lord, tune my Heart for the Work above!

I wou'd alſo reſolve to be converſant in the other World in my Thoughts, Meditations and Deſires, often aſcending thither, placing my ſelf in the Aſſembly of the Juſt, accompanying my departed Friends into their bleſſed Manſions, joining, in

my poor manner, in their Anthems, trying to ſing the Song of *Zion*. This will make the Thoughts of Death eaſy to me, and the thing itſelf ſafe. I ſhall then go to a World and Work, which, in ſome meaſure, I know; and have that to comfort me at my Diſſolution, the dying Martyr had, that *tho' I change my Place, yet not my Company.*

Further, I wou'd endeavour to have frequent Reference to this ſolemn and awful Period *of dying*, both in my Civil and Religious Affairs; endeavouring ſo to act in all things, as that I may review my Work with Comfort in a dying Hour; often ſaying to my ſelf, How will this look at Death? What Opinion ſhall I have of it, when Death ſtares me in the Face? Some there have been, who ſcarce put up a ſerious Prayer, without a ſpecial Reference to their latter End, and fervent Petitions for the divine Preſence with them at that Time; nay, ſcarce awake out of Sleep, but the Scene of Death and Eternity opens before their Eyes. May this be the Bent and Frame of my Mind.

Laſtly, I reſolve, by the Grace of God, to haſten and diſpatch my Preparation, that I may be able to ſay in my Meaſure, as my Lord and Maſter did, *Father, I have glorified thee on Earth, I have finiſhed the Work thou gaveſt me to do*, Joh. xvii. 4. I wou'd leave nothing undone that's neceſſary to be done; whatever my Hand finds to do, I wou'd do it *ſpeedily*, leſt that Day come upon me unawares. In ſhort, if there be any Iniquity in my Hands, any Omiſſions, Neglects, unmortified Luſts, any thing that may make a Death-bed uneaſy, I wou'd not reſt till I have got it remov'd. Theſe are my Purpoſes, my Reſolutions: May they be eſtabliſh'd!

The

The Colloquy and Aſpiration.

AND now, oh my God! I turn myſelf to thee: I want Wiſdom, Courage, Zeal, Reſolution for the Work before me: I want many Graces, and freſh Supplies of every Grace. I'm impriſon'd and enſnar'd in this Body; ſurrounded with a Variety of Objects that ſtrike upon my Senſes, and dangerouſly inſinuate themſelves. Oh defend me by thy Grace! raiſe me above the animal Life; help me to regulate and govern the Paſſions and Inclinations of the Body; to withſtand the Allurements of ſenſible things: Strengthen my Faith, my Views of Eternity, and enable me to look beyond *this Inch of Time.* And oh that I may be in good earneſt! may I trifle no more in the Concerns of my Soul, and another World. I muſt die, I muſt die, ſaid one, when ask'd the Reaſon of his extraordinary Zeal and Diligence in Religion. O my Soul, think of dying, and live for Eternity; redeem thy Time, improve thy Talents, diſcharge the Duties of thy Office, thy Place and Relations, as becomes a dying Man. Lord, help by thy Grace, work in me to will and to do of thy good Pleaſure; to thee I reſign my ſelf, on thee I depend, keep what I have committed to thee againſt that Day; and when *I walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death,* be thou with me, let *thy Rod and thy Staff comfort me.*

A Meditation on the Immortality of the Soul.

A Second Specimen. HAving put up a few Petitions for divine Aſſiſtance, you ſet your ſelf to conſider your Subject; and if you think proper to make a Text of Scripture the Foundation of your Diſcourſe, that will not be unſuitable, *Eccleſ.* xii. 17. *And the Spirit ſhall return to God who gave it; then ſhall the Duſt return to the Earth, as it was, and the Spirit,* &c. which plainly implies, that the Soul dies not with the Body, it goes upwards, *Eccleſ.* iii. 21. *It returns to God,* ſays the Text: And here, ſay you, I'll (1.) conſider the Evidences of this great fundamental Doctrine of my Religion; (2.) next briefly inquire what may be intended by that Phraſe, *returneth unto God that gave it*; and then add practical Reflections. As to the Evidence of this Doctrine, I ſhall call to mind ſuch Conſiderations, as I have found to have the greateſt weight with me; as

1. That the Soul hath nothing in its own Nature that tendeth to, or threatens a Diſſolution: 'Tis a pure, ſpiritual, immaterial Subſtance, not [h] compounded, or made up of jarring Principles or diſſimilar Parts; it has no Seeds of Corruption in it ſelf, and therefore ſuppoſing the Will of God to continue it, in its Exiſtence and Being, there can be no Danger of its periſhing.

2. The Dignity and Excellency of the Soul is an Argument for its Immortality: God has made Man

[h] *Et quum ſimplex animi natura eſſet, neque haberet in ſe quicquam admixtum diſpar ſui atque diſſimile, non poſſe eum dividi.* Cic. *de Senect.*

but

but *a little lower than the Angels*; ſet him at the very Top of the Creation; conſtituted him his Repreſentative in the World, and Lord over all the Creatures; and to qualify him for his Station and Rank, has diſtinguiſh'd him with the moſt excellent Faculties. We know indeed but little of our ſelves, of the nature of our Faculties, and the manner of their Operations; but ſo much I can underſtand, as is a plain Intimation to me that I am not a *meer Body*: I find and feel in my ſelf a Principle, diſtinct from Matter, and ſuperior to Senſe; and when I conſider it in all its Capacities, I cannot but infer it is deſign'd for Immortality. How noble, and even angelical a Power is that of the Underſtanding! It can penetrate into the ſecret Receſſes of Nature; reaſon, infer, reflect and carry on a Chain of Thoughts with a clear Connection; can ſurvey the whole Creation, aſcend above it, and contemplate the glorious Author of all: So the Will, another Faculty of the human Soul, the Principle of all Freedom and Liberty, how excellent and even God-like a Power is it? It can chuſe or refuſe, and by a ſovereign Sort of Empire, controul even the ſtrongeſt and moſt impetuous Inclinations of the ſenſitive Appetite. Wou'd *Socrates* have taken the fatal Cup, and died a Martyr for the Unity of the Godhead, oppoſing the Superſtition and Idolatry of the Country, had he not had an inward Principle, different from Body, and which over-ruled the Love of Life? In ſhort, conſider Man in all the Endowments of his Mind, in his Underſtanding, Will, Conſcience, Memory, as acting under the Awe of God and Religion: Conſider him in his Proſpects and Views of Futurity; in all his Deſires, Deſigns and Tendencies, how admirable a Creature will he appear? He is *nexus utriuſque mundi*, by his Body allied to this Earth, by his Spirit near a kin to Heaven;

Heaven: Hence[i] *Seneca* calls the Soul a God ſojourning in a human Body; a certain domeſtick God, as another calleth it.

And can we imagine ſuch a Creature made for a Day, as it were, to exiſt only during its Union with the Body? How much of our ſhort Time is ſpent in Infancy and Non-age, when we can reliſh little but the animal Life, or Life of Senſe, and ſcarce differ from meer Brutes, but in our Shape? How much afterwards is paſs'd away in childiſh Toys? How long before we underſtand what 'tis to be Men, and how much longer often, before we know what 'tis to be Chriſtians? We are almoſt ready to leave the World, er'e we rightly apprehend our Errand into it: And ſhall we ſuppoſe we are deſign'd for no After-exiſtence? Is it conſiſtent with the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God, to frame ſo excellent a Creature purely for the preſent State? To take a few Turns upon the Stage of the World, to taſte of its Vanity and Curſe, to ſigh and weep a while, to view ſome Scenes of Sorrow and Folly, and then paſs away and be no more. "If the Queſtion were "put, ſays one, Wherefore did God make Man? "Who wou'd not be aſham'd ſo to anſwer it, He "made him to eat and drink and take his Pleaſures, "to gather up Wealth, for he knows not Whom; "to uſe his Invention, that each one may become "a Talk and Wonder to the reſt; and when he "hath fetcht a few Turns upon the Theatre, and "entertain'd the Eyes of Beholders, with a ſhort "Scene of Impertinences, deſcend, and never be "heard of more? What! That he ſhould come in-"to the World, furniſh'd with ſuch Powers and

How Vanity of Men mortal.

[i] *Quid aliud eſt anima quam Deus in corpore humano hoſpitans*: Τις ἔνοικος θεὸς. Hierocles.

"En-

" Endowments for this! It were a like Caſe if one " ſhou'd be clad in Scarlet to go to Plow, or curi- " ouſly inſtructed in Arts and Sciences to attend " Hogs." The Dignity of Man's Nature, the excellent Capacities of the rational Spirit, declare him not only capable of, but appointed to another State; and if we conſider how ſhort this Life is, how full of Vanity and Vexation, we can't but infer it as a thing moſt agreeable to Reaſon, and the Perfections of the wiſe Creator, that ſuch a Creature ſhou'd not be confin'd for his Being and Happineſs, within the narrow Bounds of Time, but *is made for Immortality.*

3. 'Tis conſiderable to my preſent Purpoſe, that there ſeems ſome Senſe of Immortality impreſs'd upon the whole rational Nature: All Mankind, *Pagans*, *Jews*, *Mahometans*, and *Chriſtians*, have diſcover'd an Apprehenſion of a future State: The Books of the ancient Philoſophers, both Greeks and Romans, are full of it (tho' 'tis granted they treat the Subject as thoſe that wanted the Help of Scripture-revelation.) *Homer*, who is ſuppos'd to have flouriſh'd near a thouſand Years before Chriſt, ſpeaks of a common Receptacle for Souls, which he calls *Hades*, where good Men live in a pleaſing Quiet, and wicked Men are condemn'd to very great Puniſhments: *Plato* diſcourſes copiouſly upon the Soul's Immortality, who flouriſh'd about 400 Years before Chriſt; and *Thales* taught the ſame Doctrine in *Greece*, near 300 Years before him. In ſhort, we have here what that great Philoſopher *Cicero* calls the Law of Nature, *(viz.) the* [k] *Conſent of Nations.*

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[k] Ψυχὴ ἀθάνατος, the Soul is immortal, ſaith one of the Philoſophers, in ſo many Words. *Plutarch* in a conſolatory Diſcourſe

I might add, the wiſer and better any Part of Mankind have been, the more lively their Senſe of Immortality; the ſtronger and more vigorous their Deſires after it: *We that are in this Tabernacle,* ſaith the Apoſtle, *do groan, being burden'd, not for that we wou'd be uncloathed* (mere dying was not the thing they aim'd at) *but cloathed upon, that Mortality might be ſwallowed up of Life,* 2 Cor. v. 4. Here they find themſelves compaſs'd about with Infirmity, at a diſtance from the chief Good, and wearied with conſtant Repetitions of Vanity; ſo that the *Apoſtle* does but ſpeak the common Senſe of the beſt Saints, *Rom.* vii. 24. *O wretched Man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the Body of this Death!* Now can I think, can I allow my ſelf once to think, that there is nothing in the joint Suffrages of all Mankind in a matter of this nature! Will God delude and fruſtrate the Expectations of his Creatures? Diſappoint the Deſires he himſelf has planted in them, eſpecially the Deſires of his own Children, whom he has *begotten again unto a lively Hope?*

4. I may argue the Certainty of another State, and of the Soul's Immortality from the Juſtice of God: Rewards and Puniſhments, eternal Rewards and Puniſhments, are the Sanctions of the Divine Law. He has ſaid, *It ſhall be well with the Righteous, for they ſhall eat the fruit of their Doings*; and *that it ſhall be ill with the Wicked, for the Reward of his Hands ſhall be given him,* Iſa. iii. 10, 11. God will make a Diſtinction between the Good and the Bad, between thoſe that fear him, and fear him not: This

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Diſcourſe to *Apollonius* upon the Death of his Son, almoſt copieth the Words of *Solomon,* He is gone, ſaith he, whither he came from; the Earth to Earth again, πνεῦμα ὃ ἄνω, but the Spirit is aſcended, gone upwards (*i. e.*) returned to God: And in the like Strain many others of them ſpeak.

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he has declared he will do; and we may infallibly conclude it from the Juſtice of his Nature, *the Judge of all the Earth will do right.* But this is ſo far from being done in the preſent World, that the unequal Diſtributions of Providence have been the Offence of all Ages; *Wherefore,* ſays the Prophet, *doth the Way of the Wicked proſper? Wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherouſly?* Jer. xii. 1. And *Solomon* obſerves it, as an Inſtance of that Vanity, which was his Complaint and Exerciſe, *That there is a juſt Man that periſheth in his Righteouſneſs, and there is a wicked Man that prolongeth his Life in his Wickedneſs,* Eccleſ. vii. 15. The Inference from which muſt be, as he himſelf elſewhere makes it, *Chap.* iii. 17. *God ſhall judge the Righteous and the Wicked* (i. e.) *hereafter,* when Things come to be review'd by the great Governour of the World; *then* all ſhall be rectified, and a Deciſion made in favour of the Righteous; ſo that thou haſt, O my Soul, the fulleſt Aſſurance of thy own future Exiſtence. God rules the World by Hopes and Fears, and fills the Minds of Men with Preſages of Eternity. It would be Blaſphemy to ſuppoſe that theſe are groundleſs, a mere Fiction and Contrivance to keep the World in awe; conſequently all ſhall be made good in an After-ſtate; the Promiſes fulfill'd, the Threatnings executed, and the Soul exiſt for ever, that it may receive its Retribution.

5. With me who am a Chriſtian, it confirms my Belief of this great Article of the Immortality of the Soul, that the Son of God thought not his own precious Blood too great a Price for its Redemption. Man, by his Apoſtacy, had forfeited his Happineſs, and in that reſpect *loſt his Soul*; to recover which was the Deſign of the Lord Jeſus in his Undertaking: And how expenſive and coſtly a Work was it! How great his Conde-

Condeſcenſion, how low did he ſtoop! Being in the Form of God, he took upon him the Form of a Servant, and in that State and Condition he liv'd. During his private Life, I find him employ'd as an ordinary Mechanick; hence he's not only call'd *The Carpenter's Son*, but *The Carpenter*, Mark vi. 3. And *Juſtin Martyr* ſaith, *He made Ploughs and Harrows.* When he entered upon the Stage of publick Action, Poverty and Contempt ſtill followed him; he had *not where to lay his Head*, Matth. viii. 20. liv'd upon Contribution, *Luke* viii. 3. endur'd the Contradiction of Sinners, Malice of Men, and Rage of Devils: And how amazing his laſt Conflicts in the Garden! Particularly, when he ſweat *Drops of Blood*, Luke xxii. 44. and on the Croſs, when he cried out, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* Matt. xxvii. 46. How reproachful and grievous the Circumſtances of his Death? He was mock'd, revil'd, ſpit upon, ſmote on the Face, pierc'd, crown'd with Thorns, and crucified; hung up between Heaven and Earth, as one worthy of neither; where he died a publick Victim, a Spectacle to Angels and Men! And ſuch a Spectacle the World never ſaw before! The only begotten of the Father dying upon a Croſs! Well might the Rocks rend, and the Sun hide its Face!

And what was all this for? What meant this ſtrange thing, the Lord from Heaven united to Fleſh, tabernacling in a human Body, groaning, bleeding, dying! What was the Deſign of all this? Was it only to purchaſe a ſhort Life of Vánity, after which there is to be an End of my Being, Capacities, Enjoyments for ever! To ſuppoſe this, wou'd be to blaſpheme my Redeemer, and count the *Blood of the Covenant an unholy*, (*i. e.*) a common *thing*. O my Soul, ſee thy own Worth in the Price that was paid for thee, and infer hence

thy immortal Nature: If the Soul be not immortal, Chriſt died in vain, and the Work of Redemption is a Jeſt.

6. My *Bible* puts this Matter out of all doubt. The Text informs me, that, at Death, when the Body returns to the Earth, *the Spirit returns to God. Job* ſpeaks of it, as a Matter of full Certainty with him, that when *the Worms had deſtroyed* his *Body*, he ſhould yet *ſee God*, Job xix. 26. And how clear the Teſtimony of this Truth from the bleſſed Jeſus, the faithful *AMEN? In my Father's Houſe*, ſaith he, *are many Manſions; I will receive you to my ſelf*, John xiv. 2, 3. And again, *Fear not them that kill the Body, but are not able to kill the Soul*, Matth. x. 28. He ſuppoſes the Body may be deſtroyed, and yet the Soul untouch'd; plainly ſignifying, that 'tis a Principle diſtinct from the Body, and can ſubſiſt without it. He tells the converted Thief on the Croſs, that that *Day* he ſhould *be with* him *in Paradiſe*, Luke xxiii. 43. And in the Moment of his own Diſſolution, commended his Spirit into the Hands of his Father, *Luke* xxiii. 46. And to mention no more, with how much Solemnity are the dead pronounced bleſſed, *Rev.* xiv. 13. *Bleſſed are the Dead——their Works follow them* (i. e.) into the other State, where they find and enjoy a Bleſſedneſs. And, O my Soul! canſt thou heſitate about a Doctrine that has ſo great Authority to ſupport it? That is confirm'd by ſo many Teſtimonies from Heaven?

Nor do I want 7. What I may call *a ſenſible Evidence* of a future State of Exiſtence: To ſay nothing of the Stories of Apparitions, or the Appearance of departed Spirits (which yet I apprehend are not to be wholly neglected, as of no Weight in this Queſtion, purely becauſe too many of theſe Stories are Fable. There have been lying

Wonders, falſe Miracles; but that's no Argument againſt true ones, or that there never were any ſuch. But not to inſiſt on this, the Scripture affords Inſtances of departed Spirits, ſubſiſting in a State of Separation, and ſometimes returning back again into our World; as that of the *Shunamite*'s Son, 2 *Kings* iv. 18. That of *Jairus*'s Daughter, *Matt.* ix. 18. And of *Lazarus*, John xi. 39. The Apoſtle *Peter* ſpeaks of *Spirits in Priſon*, (i. e.) the Spirits of thoſe that died in the Days of *Noah*, 1 *Pet* iii. 19. And the Apoſtle *Jude* of the *Sodomites* (deſtroy'd by Fire ſo many Ages before) as then *ſuffering the Vengeance of eternal Fire*, Jude 7. And when *Chriſt* was transfigured, I find *Moſes* and *Elias* appearing upon the Mount with him, *Matth.* xvii. 3. Now theſe and the like Inſtances are ſuch Arguments for the Point I am conſidering, as amount to a ſort of *a ſenſible Demonſtration.* Suppoſing the Truth of Scripture Hiſtory, I have the ſame Satisfaction that Spirits exiſt ſeparate from the Body, and live in another World, as if I ſaw them deſcend from thence in their Vehicles, or had my ſelf been viſited by ſome of my departed Friends. Nay, the Evidence here is ſtronger; for in the one Caſe I might ſuſpect Deluſion, which the Teſtimony of Scripture in theſe Examples ſecures me from. O my Soul! be eſtabliſhed in the Belief of this Doctrine; here is ſufficient Proof of thine Immortality, ſuch as thou mayeſt reſt in without Fear of Impoſture. When the Body dieth, the Spirit dies not with it, but *returns to God.*

A ſe-

A ſecond Meditation on the Soul's Immortality.

AS the Spirit ſubſiſts after the Death of the Body, ſo I am here told it returns to God who gave it. How returns? What may this import?

1. It may imply, that the Spirit *is from God* in a ſpecial Senſe; in a more immediate manner than the Body is. Hence 'tis ſaid, that *God gave it*, and elſewhere he's called, *the Father of Spirits*, Heb. xii. 9. (*i. e.*) by way of Eminency and Diſtinction.

2. It returns to God, (*viz.*) into his immediate Preſence: *Whilſt at home in the Body, we are abſent from the Lord*, 2 Cor. v. 6. This Body is, as a Veil or Covering, interpos'd between God and the Soul, which hinders the Perception and Sight of God; but Death draws aſide the Veil, and repreſents the divine Majeſty to naked unbodied Spirits, after a very different manner than before. Good Men behold his Face in Righteouſneſs, and ſee him as he is, in his pure and more immediate Glory; not thro' a Glaſs darkly, as now in the Body, but Face to Face. Wicked Men alſo, upon this Return, behold in a full Light what once they ſo little thought of; they find the Scales fallen from their Eyes, and ſee God in all his Terrors. Now they are cured of their Infidelity, and with the Devils believe and tremble. *Fall on us, O ye Rocks*, ſay they, *and hide us from the Face of him that ſits upon the Throne.*

3. It returns to give an Account: Here 'tis upon Trial, and in a State of Probation; at Death, it returns to render an Account to its Creator and Lord; an Account how it uſed the Body; its Senſes,

ſes, Appetites, Members; how it acted in its ſeveral Relations and Capacities, during its Abode in the Body; how it improv'd its Time, Talents, Enjoyments, and Opportunities of doing or getting Good: In ſhort, to give an Account *of all the things done in the Body*; of its entire Conduct towards God and Man. O may I not miſtake my great Buſineſs, and *return, re infectâ*, the Work of Life undone! It would be better for me to be annihilated, ſink into nothing, than ſee the Face of my God, *and return to him*, having forgot my Errand. O my Soul! labour that, whether preſent or abſent, thou mayſt be accepted of God: Aſſiſt me, Lord, by thy Grace.

4. The Spirit returns to God to be judged by him, and receive its Sentence for Eternity. *We muſt all appear before the Judgment Seat of Chriſt*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *that every one may receive the things done in the Body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad*, 2 Cor. v. 10. Every one's State is determined immediately upon his Diſſolution: Not that he has then *the full Retribution*, either in Happineſs or Miſery; but the Sentence is paſt, either of Life or Death, and that for ever, which afterwards will be confirm'd with the Solemnity and Awfulneſs of a future Judgment. No ſooner was the rich Man in the Parable dead, but *he lift up his Eyes in Torments*; and when *Lazarus* died, he was immediately *carried by Angels into Abraham's Boſom*, Luke xvi. 22, 23. O may I ſtand in a good Lot, may I find Mercy at that Day! and when Chriſt, who is my Life, ſhall appear, appear with him in Glory.

The INSTRUCTION.

1. HOW grateful and acceptable ſhould this Doctrine be to me? Did this Life limit my Duration, and bound my Hopes, I might juſtly take up the Pſalmiſt's Complaint, *Pſal.* lxxxix. 47. *Remember how ſhort my Time is: Wherefore haſt thou made all Men in vain? Few and evil,* ſaith the good Patriarch, *are the Years of my Pilgrimage,* Gen. xlvii. 9. which is true of all Mankind, *Job* xiv. 1. Our Duration here ſcarce deſerves to be called Life; 'tis a *ſhort ſomething* between being born and dying, paſs'd over in the Diſtributions of Times and Seaſons to every Purpoſe, *Eccl.* iii. 2. *In the midſt of Life we are in Death.* And as 'tis ſhort, ſo 'tis troubleſome, and often grievous. How full of Labour are all things? How little to be attain'd here, worthy of the Name of an Happineſs to a rational Creature? If I taſte of any Enjoyment that ſeems agreeable, it hath ſo many Allays, ſuch a Mixture of bitter Ingredients in it, that 'tis hard to ſay, whether the Good or Evil of it be greater, which is moſt predominant. Application.

Or if in any State and Circumſtances of things I find ſome little Reſt, ſomething that looks like an Happineſs, ſuch as it is, how tranſient, how changeable and ſhort-liv'd? It may be, I have a few calm bright Days, but then preſently the Clouds gather again, my Horizon fills with Darkneſs, and the comfortable Scene is withdrawn: So that my Life here, at beſt, is but a Piece of chequer'd Work, made up of Intervals of Pain and Pleaſure; to-day I put off my Sackcloth, and gird me with Gladneſs; to-morrow the Sable comes on again: And thus I go the Round, Tears and Joy mutually ſucceeding. And how vain, how wretched

a Creature ſhould I be, had I no future Proſpects? And how cruel and inhuman the Attempts of thoſe, who would deprive me thereof; who endeavour to degrade their own Species, and ſet them upon a Level with the Beaſts that periſh? One might ſay to them, as was ſaid in another Caſe, *Parcite, Homunculi, unicæ ſpei totius humani generis:* Spare the only Hopes of Mankind. *But, O my Soul! come not thou into their Secret, unto their Aſſembly, mine Honour, be not thou united* Reſolve, never to quit a Doctrine that's the great Support and [1] Dignity of thy Nature: Was it only probable, no wiſe Man would willingly part with it; much leſs, when it ſtands upon ſo ſure a Foundation.

2. This Doctrine affords a proper Relief againſt the Fear of Death. To die, what is that? Only to leave the Body, not to loſe thy own Being: 'Tis to be ſet at Liberty, releas'd from thy Bonds and Fetters, diſcharg'd from thy Priſon, and properly to live. *Bleſſed are the dead:*

——*dicique beatus*
Ante obitum nemo ſupremaque funera debet.

Death's a Paſſage to Immortality, to Happineſs; ſo that in this Matter we *ſorrow not as thoſe that have no Hope,* 1 Theſſ. iv. 13. and conſequently ſhould repreſent Death to our ſelves, not in the Terrors of a deſtructive Enemy, but as doing a kind Office. *Pythagoras* his Fancy of the Tranſmigration

[1] Si in hoc erro, quod Animos hominum immortales eſſe credam, libenter erro; nec mihi hunc errorem, quo delector, dum vivo extorqueri volo; ſin mortuus (ut minuti Philoſophi cenſent) nihil ſentiam, non vereor ne hunc errorem meum mortui Philoſophi irrideant. *Cic. de Senect.*

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of the Soul (its paſſing at Death into another Body, and ſo enjoying Life again) made his Diſciples fearleſs of dying: But here is firmer Ground of Courage and Comfort; not only *another*, but a *better* Life in view, and a ſure Evidence concerning it. And how ſhould this take off the Dread of dying? "If to die, ſaith *Socrates*, be to go "to another Place, and thoſe who have departed "this Life are with God, what greater Good can "there be?" He adds, "For this I would "willingly die over and over again." O my Soul! learn to think of Death with Calmneſs and Compoſure; thou needeſt not, ſhouldſt not, thro' Fear of it, be all thy Life-time ſubject to bondage. The [m] Philoſopher ſays juſtly, Death is only terrible to them, *who with Life loſe all:* But this is not the Chriſtian's Caſe. Believe Immortality, and fear not Death.

In the mean time, 3. The Comfort of this Doctrine is confin'd. Immortality, or a future eternal Exiſtence after Death, ſpeaketh Comfort to *ſome*, but not to *all*; 'tis like the Pillar of Fire, and a Cloud, that was Light to *Iſrael*, but Darkneſs to the *Egyptians:* To ſome 'tis as the Savour of Death, *viz.* To the Ungodly, that have their Hope and Happineſs in this Life only. Did it only put an End to their preſent Gratifications, it would be melancholy enough to them; to have all their Dreams vaniſh, their pleaſing Imaginations deſtroy'd at once; to be torn away from all their dear Enjoyments for ever, is diſmal and ſhocking. But this is not the worſt of it: When the rich Man, in the Parable died, his Pomp and Pleaſure died

[m] Mors iis terribilis, quorum cum vitâ *omnia* extinguuntur. *Cic.*

with him; no more Purple and fine Linen, no more ſumptuous Fare; nay, not a Drop of Water to cool his Tongue. But that's not all, *he was tormented in Flame:* And thus 'tis with all that live as he did; that believe not *Moſes* and the Prophets; that neglect their Souls and another World; that ſpend their Time in Pomp and Pleaſure: Death is the *King of Terrors to them,* it carries them *into utter Darkneſs, where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnaſhing of Teeth.*

A third Meditation on the Immortality of the Soul.

4. IF the Soul be immortal, I may hence learn how to rate and value things, *viz. by their Reference to Immortality.* I have two States of Exiſtence, or Being; one in the Body, the other out of it; one in Time, the other in Eternity: one for a Moment, the other for everlaſting; which affords a ſure Rule to direct me what to chuſe, and what to prefer. 'Tis plain, the things which are confin'd to my preſent State and Duration, can be but of little Account, *compar'd with the Concernments of Eternity.* *Seneca* contemplating the Greatneſs and Beauty of thoſe Orbs of Light above, caſts down his Eyes to find out the Earth, hardly viſible at that Diſtance, and breaks forth into a Philoſophical Diſdain: "Is it this to which the great De- "ſigns and vaſt Deſires of Men are confin'd? Is "it for this there is ſuch Diſturbance of Nations; "Wars, and ſhedding of Blood? Oh Folly, O "Fury of deceived Men? to imagine great King- "doms in the Compaſs of an Atom; to raiſe Ar- "mies, to divide a Point of Earth with their "Swords; 'tis juſt as if the Ants ſhou'd conceive "a Field

Bates Immortality of the Soul, 280.

" a Field to be ſeveral Kingdoms, and fiercely " contend to enlarge their Borders, and celebrate a " Triumph in gaining a Foot of Earth, as a new " Province to their Empire." And from hence he excites Men to aſcend in their Thoughts, and take an intellectual Poſſeſſion of the material Heavens, as moſt worthy of their Minds. Earthly things are ſo little and mean, compar'd with the things of the other World, that they ſcarce deſerve a ſolicitous Thought, eſpecially when the Inequality of our Duration in this and that World is conſidered. How juſtly does the ſame Philoſopher elſewhere cry out, *Niſi ad ſtudium cœleſtium homo admitteretur, non fuerit operæ pretium naſci: O quam contempta res ſit homo, niſi ſupra humana ſe erexerit?* It wou'd not be worth while for a Man to be born and live, did he not ſtudy heavenly things: How contemptible a thing is that which we call *Man*, unleſs he raiſe himſelf above earthly and bodily Enjoyments? O my Soul! compare thy preſent with thy future Exiſtence, and never call any thing great and good, that reaches no further than this Moment of Time, that will not accompany thee into the other World, and has no Connection with Immortality. *We look not*, ſays the Apoſtle, *at things which are ſeen, which are temporal*, 2 Cor. iv. 18. They made them not their Scope, and indeed wou'd ſcarce glance at 'em, caſt an Eye upon them. The things which are ſeen, the things of time, are but Cyphers in themſelves; 'tis Eternity, that like Figures added to them, gives them their Significancy and Worth!

Conſequently, 5. 'Tis evident to a Demonſtration my chief Concern ought to be about Immortality, to ſecure the Intereſt and Welfare of the Soul, the never dying Part. I am directed not to *labour for the Meat that periſhes*; of which Nature

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are all earthly things that go no further than the Body. I ought to be indifferent about theſe things; my Labour, my moſt earneſt Contention and Care, is due to eternal things, the Meat that endures to everlaſting Life. O may I always be affected towards *this* World, and *that* World, as the Affairs of both require! May I conſider and adjuſt their ſeveral Claims and Intereſts; love both according to their Value and Importance to me. This is a Point of the greateſt Wiſdom, a Miſtake in which is the main Cauſe of Ruine to thoſe that periſh. "We

Mr. *How*'s Vanity of Man as mortal.

"ſhould (ſays a divine Author, arguing from the preſent Doctrine) "endeavour a calm Indifferen-
"cy, and diſpaſſionate Temper of Mind towards
"the various Objects and Affairs that belong to
"this Life. There are very narrow Limits ſet al-
"ready by the Nature of the things themſelves;
"and 'tis the Part of Wiſdom and Juſtice to ſet
"the proportionable Bounds to all the Thoughts,
"Cares and Paſſions we will ſuffer to ſtir in our
"Minds, with reference to them. Nothing is a
"more acknowledged Character of a Fool, than
"upon every ſlight Occaſion, to be in a Tranſ-
"port; to be much taken with empty things
"betokens an empty Spirit; a rational Authority,
"Continency and Dominion over one's ſelf, muſt
"be maintained, that we never be ſo affected with
"any thing, but the Object may be able to juſti-
"fy and warrant the Affection: Conſequently we
"ſhall rarely meet with any temporal Concern that
"ought to move us; both for the Littleneſs of
"ſuch things themſelves, and that we have ſo un-
"ſpeakably greater things in view. How con-
"temptibly ſhould we look upon that empty Va-
"nity, *being rich!* The Purſuit of ſo deſpicable a
"Trifle, with violent and peremptory Deſires, ſo
"as hereby to ſuffer a Diverſion from our De-
"ſigns

" ſigns for another World, is to make our eternal " Hopes leſs than nothing. And with the like " Neglect ſhould all ſenſual Pleaſures, ſecular Ho- " nours, Dignities, *&c.* be treated. We are to " act with Coolneſs and Indifferency as to all theſe " things, and to manifeſt it to all; to declare it " *plainly*, by a conſtant uniform Courſe of Acti- " on, that we are Pilgrims and Strangers on the " Earth, and are ſeeking a better Country.

" That lofty Soul, adds he, that bears about " with it the Apprehenſion of being made for an " everlaſting State, ſo earneſtly intends it, that it " ſhall ever be a Condeſcenſion and Vouchſafement " with it, if it allow it ſelf to take notice what " buſy Mortals are doing in their (as they reckon " them) grand Negotiations here below. *We of* " *this Academy* (ſays the Philoſopher to the jealous " Tyrant) *are not at leiſure to mind ſo mean things* " (as the Concerns of his Court) *We have ſome-* " *thing elſe to do, than to talk of you.* With how " much more Reaſon may the Chriſtian ſay this? " He hath ſtill the Image before his Eye of this " World vaniſhing and paſſing away; of the other, " with the everlaſting Concernments of it, even " now ready to take place, and fill up all the Stage." Oh may the Affairs of Immortality thus fill my Mind, and the Affairs of this Earth, of this τὸ νῦν, this *ſhort now*, and Moment of Life ſhrink, and lye as Duſt under my Feet!

Nor is this to be lookt upon as mere Rhetorication, a Flouriſh of Words; 'tis no more than what a juſt Compariſon of Time and Eternity will admit and ſuggeſt. Suppoſe the preſent Life and Duration (conſiſting I'll ſay of eighty Years) divided into two Periods; *into one Month, and into ſeventy nine Years eleven Months:* Suppoſe alſo the Month was prepa-

preparatory, and a ſort of an Introduction to the other Period, when the whole State and Circumſtances ſhou'd undergo a mighty Change, and that according to our Behaviour *in the Month?* Who ſees not the Concerns of the *ſeventy nine Years* are greateſt? Wou'd not Reaſon and common Senſe direct to prefer Comfort and Happineſs, in that long Duration, to every thing that might pretend to it in the foregoing Month? Wou'd it not be an Exceſs of Folly, and even Madneſs, to paſs the Month in Sport, in Vanity and Pleaſures, or in little Cares and Buſineſs, *relating to that ſhort Space only*, while the other Duration was neglected? *(i. e.)* to be happy for a Month, at the Hazard of being a Slave and miſerable for eighty Years. Wou'd not the Month's Probationer, as I may call him, did he act with common Prudence, have his chief Reference to the After-Period? Wou'd he think of indulging his Eaſe and Pleaſure, if this was like to entail Miſery upon him hereafter? Nay, wou'd he not deſpiſe every thing of that kind? Eſpecially when he conſidered, the more ſelf-denied he was, the more diligent to improve in the Month, the more comfortable and happy he ſhou'd be in the After-Duration. This Month, ſays he, will ſoon be over, and then I ſhall be happy, and enjoy my ſelf for many Years. Oh my Soul! this is a faint Reſemblance of thy Circumſtances in Life: Thou art here *a few Days*, and Eternity remains. Now is thy Seed-time for everlaſting: As thou ſoweſt here, thou ſhalt reap hereafter. Look therefore to Eternity, and be little concern'd about the Month, *this Moment of Time*; provide for everlaſting: Remember *one thing is needful*; and put on the Reſolution of the pious Martyr, who when he was bid to take Care of himſelf, replied,

So

So I will of my beſt [n] *ſelf*, meaning the immortal Soul.

The Soliloquy and Complaint.

BUT oh my Soul! how haſt thou forgot thy ſelf, forgot thy Relation to Eternity, thy future Exiſtence, and the Concernments thereof? How unduly affected haſt thou been towards this and the other World? How have the Vanities and Amuſementts of this ſhort Moment of Being and Duration, confin'd and engroſs'd thy Thoughts and Cares? Eternity is ſo awful a Sound, that it ſhould carry thy Mind above the things of Time, and quite drown the Noiſe of them, as the Report of a Cannon doth that of a Whiſper. But alas! how much otherwiſe has it been, and is it with me? How have I waſted my Affections upon preſent Dreams and Shadows, rejoicing and weeping over a Clod of Earth! Like the poor *Ephramite*, that cried after his *Teraphim*, *They have taken away my Gods*, ſaith he, *and what have I more?* Judg. xviii. 24. With what *Ovation*, and ſort of Triumph, do we talk of what we call an Eſtate, *My Eſtate*, when in a Map of the World it would ſcarce be diſcernible; one might cover it with a Pin's Head? I can't but ſometimes think with my ſelf, how the *Angels* pity us, and ſmile at us, when they look down upon our laborious and ſolicitous Purſuits of ſuch minute things. Oh Wretch that I am! that my Mind is ſo much depreſs'd, and drawn down to this Earth, that I can no better extend my Views. Lord, anoint mine Eyes with Eye-ſalve; grant me that Faith which

[n] Anima cujuſque eſt quiſque.

is

is the *Subſtance of things hoped for, the Evidence of things not ſeen!*

The RESOLUTION.

AND am I immortal? Doth my Spirit at Death *return to God*, and exiſt for ever in a ſeparate State? I would henceforth reſolve *to live for Eternity*, to prepare for my *Return*. In order to which I reſolve (Lord, help me by thy Grace) to have my Eye fixed on the other World; and, in all my Deſigns, Undertakings and Actions, to preſerve a conſtant Reference thither. I would eſteem every thing as little, as nothing comparatively, that's calculated only for the Meridian of Time, that ſerveth only a preſent State. I reſolve to chuſe, prefer, purſue things, as they ſtand related to Eternity, judging of them by this Mark and Property, *as they ſignify for another World, relate to Eternity, and contribute to the Bleſſedneſs of it*. I reſolve not *to look* at the things that are *ſeen*, but at the things that are *unſeen*; and what concerneth only the Body and Time, ſhall have little of my Thought and Care. O my Soul! thus I reſolve; Lord, ſtrengthen and confirm me by thy Grace.

I reſolve to be often *returning* before-hand to my God, reſigning and committing my Spirit to him, *to keep it againſt that Day*; keep it ſafe from the Injuries, Snares and Temptations of its bodied State, and the Impreſſions of ſenſible Objects; returning to him in a way of ſolemn Devotion, delighting in him, converſing with him, comforting and refreſhing my ſelf in the beſt manner I can in his ſpecial Preſence; that at my *laſt Return* at Death, I may not go to a God I have been eſtranged from.

Above

Above all, I would reſolve to get my Heart fram'd and form'd for a bleſſed Immortality: I would make it the great Buſineſs, and Work of my Religion and Life, to cultivate and improve my Mind, that I may be meet for Paradiſe, meet for the Happineſs of the ſeparate immortal State: Particularly, I reſolve to ſeek and endeavour after a Weanedneſs from the Body, " a Refinedneſs " from this Earth, a thorough Purgation of all " undue Degrees of ſenſual Affection; a Conſumption of my Droſs by a ſacred Fire from Heaven; an Aptitude to ſpiritual Exerciſes and Enjoyments; high Complacency in God, fervent " Love; a worſhipping Poſture of Soul, form'd " to the Veneration of the eternal Wiſdom, Goodneſs, Power and Holineſs: Profound Humility, " and Abnegation of ſelf; a prayerful Frame of " Spirit, much us'd to Gratulations and Thankſgivings: A large and univerſal Love, imitating, " as much as poſſible, the divine Love; a ſteady " Compoſure and ſerene Temper of Spirit, not " boiſterous, nor apt to create Storms to my ſelf " or the World; every way ſuited to the bliſsful " Regions, where nothing but perfect Purity, entire Devotedneſs to God; Love, Goodneſs, " Benignity, Well-pleaſedneſs, Order and Peace, " ſhall have Place for ever. This, O my Soul! " thou oughteſt to be conſtantly intent upon; " this ſhould be thy daily Work *(viz.)* to get " thy Spirit ſo attempered and fitted to Heaven, " that if thou be asked what Deſign thou driveſt, " what thou art doing, thou mayeſt be able to " make this true Anſwer, *Thou art dreſſing thy ſelf " for Eternity.*"

How Vanity of Man as mortal.

The

The ASPIRATION.

O My God! the Father of Spirits, who haſt form'd and faſhion'd them, and haſt the immediate Conduct and Government of 'em, viſit this Soul of mine; enlighten, purify, ſanctify throughout; fit me for thine Embraces; help me to breathe after Immortality; to be ſeparating my ſelf more and more from this World and Body; and more conſtantly to intend and ſeek the other World; to preſs towards it, and long for Admiſſion thither: I would be patient of the Body, but not fond of it, conſidering *a good Man ſhould only need Leave to die.* Lord, aſſiſt me, by thy Grace to attain this Indifferency, to die daily, and to live for Immortality. May I be trimming my Lamps, adorning as a Bride for her Husband. I leave the Worlding to purſue his Duſt, 'tis an intellectual ſpiritual Treaſure I would be ambitious of. O may I be arrayed in Gold of Ophir! May I be all glorious within, and be brought to the King, at laſt, in Raiment of Needle-work; be cloath'd with white Raiment; and I ſhall little regard other Ornaments: Lord, for thee I wait:

O come thou down to me,
Or take me up to thee.

A Meditation on the Reſurrection of the Juſt.

A third Specimen.

HAving begg'd the divine Preſence, Aſſiſtance and Bleſſing, and choſe ſome Scripture, as the Foundation of your Diſcourſe; as that *Luke* xiv.

xiv. 14. *Thou ſhalt be recompenſed at the Reſurrection of the Juſt*, you may proceed thus. 1. Say you, I will conſider what I am to expect under the Reſurrection.

2. Take notice of the Properties and Qualities of the Reſurrection-Body.

3. Review the Grounds and Principles upon which the Doctrine ſtands, and conſider the Arguments by which the Truth and Certainty of it is eſtabliſhed.

4. Apply all to myſelf.

1. I am to conſider what I am to expect under the Notion of a Reſurrection.

What is meant by the Reſurrection.

Firſt, At the Reſurrection, and as included in it, I expect *a Body*. The *Anaſtaſis*, or Reſurrection, implies more than the Exiſtence of the Soul, and its Life in a ſeparate State; the literal and proper meaning of the Word is *riſing again*; which ſuppoſeth that ſomething fell, which can be only the Body. Hence it is ſaid to be *of the Dead*, Matt. xxiii. 31. Act. xxiii. 6. It is of thoſe that were in the Grave, *John* v. 28. Now the Soul cannot be ſaid to have died, or have been in the Grave; conſequently the Reſurrection is of the Body. And ſo the Apoſtle intimates, *Rom.* viii. 11. He *ſhall quicken our mortal Body*; ζωοποιήσει, he ſhall make it live again.

Secondly, As I expect a Body, ſo I expect *the ſame Body*, that my Soul is now united to. *This corruptible*, ſays the Apoſtle, *muſt put on Incorruption*: This mortal (τὸ φθαρτὸν τοῦτο) that ſame thing, that was corruptible and mortal, ſhall be rais'd, and be made incorruptible and immortal. To the ſame Purpoſe, *Rom.* viii. 23. We wait for *the Redemption of our Bodies*. So *Philip.* iii. 21. He *ſhall change our vile Body*. We ſhall not only have a Body, but *our Body*; our own Body; this ſhall be re-

deem'd from Corruption, and chang'd; *the same* Tabernacle that was pull'd down, *the same* Temple that was demolished, shall be reared up again. This is the Doctrine of Scripture, and accordingly the ancient Church [o] express their Faith, *Resur-*

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[o] There were several in the primitive Church, that professed to believe the Resurrection of the Body or of *a Body*, but not of the *same* Body which now we have; but instead thereof they imagined, that at the Resurrection Day there wou'd be framed, by the Power of God, thin, subtle, aerial Bodies, whereunto human Souls should be joined, in lieu of these gross material fleshly Bodies, which they now actuate and inform; in Opposition to whom the Word *Flesh* was inserted in the Creed, as being of a more determinate Sense. The *Originists*, saith *Jerom*, profess the Belief of the future Resurrection of the Body; and because there are celestial and terrestrial Bodies, and the Air and æther, according to them, are called Bodies, therefore they use the Word *Body*, and not *Flesh*; and as this was a Controversy at that time, so the Fathers are very express and distinct in declaring their Faith, and maintaining what they took to be, the Christian Doctrine. *Ruffinus* particularly, (being, it seems, under some Suspicion with reference to this Point) We confess, says he, that the Resurrection of our Flesh shall be whole and perfect, of *this our Flesh*, wherein we now live; for we do not say, as some have slandered us, that another Body shall rise instead of this, but that it shall be *this very same Body*, without the Loss of any of its Members, or the Defect of any Part of the Body, unto which nothing of its Nature shall be wanting, except Corruption: And agreeable hereto, in the *Aquileian* Creed, the Article runs thus; I believe the Resurrection *hujus Carnis*, of *this Flesh*. In another Creed (that of *Damasus*) 'tis thus expressed, We believe we shall be raised with the same real Members and Flesh, in which we now live. *Jerome* declares, that the Catholick Faith can't be maintained, unless it be admitted that a Body with Flesh and Bones, Blood and Members, be restored. Another of these Creeds has it; We confess that, according to the Example of our Head, there shall be a true Resurrection of the Flesh of all the dead; neither do we believe we shall rise in an aerial, or any other kind of Body,

King on the Creed, *p.* 398.

Reſurrectio carnis; the Reſurrection of the Fleſh being an Article in all their Creeds. So that there ſeems too much Boldneſs in that of a Philoſophick Writer. "Suppoſe (ſays he) a Perſon die in "*England*, and be buried in one of our Church-"Yards, and God ſhould form him a Body out "of one of the Mountains of *Peru*, it might pro-"perly be called a Reſurrection:" But methinks not *very properly*; a Creation it might be called, but not a Reſurrection, which ſeems to include, in the Notion of it, a Renovation or Reſtitution.

What identifies, or goes to conſtitute the ſame Body, as the Scripture has not told us, we can't pretend to be certain; and therefore with reſpect thereto, can have no determinate Faith. Its *Sameneſs* does not imply, that it ſhall have the ſame numerical Particles of Matter that *ever* it had in this Life. In this Senſe our Body is not the ſame in Infancy, Childhood, Youth, and old Age. It is in a conſtant flowing State, paſſeth away by inſenſible Perſpiration, and in the Courſe of a few

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Body, as ſome have dream'd, but in the very Fleſh we now live in. Their Deſign herein was to guard againſt ſeveral Opinions, which they apprehended inconſiſtent with the Doctrine of the Reſurrection, as 1. The Opinion of thoſe who believ'd the Soul ſhould have *no Body*, except ſome fine Vehicle it might receive immediately upon its Separation.

2. Of thoſe that believed God would make it *a new Body* out of other Particles and other Matter, an aereal or æthereal Body.

3. Of thoſe who believed the Reſurrection of the ſame Body, but not of an *entire Body*, with the ſame Organs and Members, with the ſame Form and Shape with the preſent Body. Againſt all theſe they formed their Article, and proceeded to ſettle and determine the Faith (it may be with too much Poſitiveneſs and Nicety of Deciſion, going further than they had Clearneſs and Warrant from Scripture)

Vide *Body* of Reſurrection, where many Examples of this kind are collected.

Years (ſeven as many have computed) undergoes a Change, receiving new Fleſh, and new Particles of Matter, at the Revolution of ſo many Years: And it is abſurd to ſuppoſe, that theſe Particles, that is, all the Matter that conſtituted the Body from our Birth to our Death, ſhall be reunited in the Reſurrection-Body.

Nor is it likely the Body, when rais'd, ſhall have the ſame Particles of Matter (neither more nor leſs) which were laid in the Grave. It is enough, ſays one, who has carried this Point as far as moſt, that ſuch Particles are rais'd, as make up the integrant or neceſſary Parts of the Body; ſuch as remain after the utmoſt Degree of Maceration, without which the Body would be imperfect: And theſe neceſſary Parts are chiefly the Bones, Skin, the Nerves, Tendons, Ligaments, and the Subſtance of the ſeveral Veſſels.

Hody on the Reſurrection, *p.* 188.

Others have thought that God will collect, out of all the Particles that ever entered the Compoſition of the human Body, and belong'd to it; collect *out of them all*, the Matter of the Reſurrection-Body: So that the more permanent and neceſſary Parts of the Body, which it had at Death, and in ſome meaſure always had, and ſome flowing Particles in every State of the Body and Time of Life; theſe collected by the divine Power ſhall conſtitute the Body at the Reſurrection. But I can conſider this and other [p] Hypotheſes of this kind

[p] The modern Philoſophers are of Opinion, ſince the late microſcopical Diſcoveries, that as Plants and Herbs derive themſelves from Seeds, ſo Animals proceed from proper animalcula; and they ſuppoſe the human Body, particularly one of the Animalcula, grown and encreaſed by the Expanſion of its numerous minute Veſſels. The Solids, that were folded up

kind only as Speculation, and not propound them to my ſelf as Matter of Faith. I wou'd not pretend to be herein wiſe above what is written: As this Doctrine depends entirely upon Revelation, I wou'd confine my ſelf, in all my Reaſonings, within the Bounds and Limits thereof. It is enough for me to know, that I ſhall have a Body; a Body, *in ſome reſpects*, the ſame; this the Scripture ſufficiently intimates, and I will depend on the Promiſe and Providence of God for Performance.

3. At the Reſurrection, and as included therein, I expect the ſame Spirit, in a State of Union with the ſame Body; that *this Body* and this *Soul* ſhall be again united in one Perſon: It is no improper Account of the Matter, which a learned Rabbi gives, when he calls the Reſurrection, "The Re- "turn of the Soul into the ſame Body, from which "it had been ſeparated." Should my Soul then receive another Body, and not the ſame; or another Spirit, and not the ſame, be united to my Body, it would not be a proper Reſurrection. *Maimon.*

4. The Union being again accompliſh'd (the ſame Body and Soul joined in the ſame Perſon,) it ſhall be diſſolved no more; I ſhall be uncloathed no more for ever: *When this corruptible ſhall put*

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up in ſo ſmall a Compaſs, are ſwelled to the Size they afterwards arrive at, by the Addition made to the Quantity of Fluids, that pervade, and fill them. Theſe ſolid or vaſcular Parts are the *ſtamina vitæ*, and always the ſame; all the Change is in the Fluids, which are indeed in a perpetual Flux, ſome conſtantly perſpiring or paſſing off by the ſecretory Glands; but the main Principles, the Veſſels of the Body, are unchangeable in their Subſtance thro' all the Periods of humane Life, and the Bodies of Men are ſo diſtinct, that one can't become a Part of another, nor ſuffer any Confuſion; which being granted, the main Difficulty that attends the Doctrine of the Reſurrection, vaniſhes.

on Incorruption, &c. *then ſhall be brought to paſs the Saying that is written, Death is ſwallowed up in Victory*, 1 Cor. xv, 54. The Children of the Reſurrection neither marry, nor are given in marriage; there is no need of Marriage, to continue the Species, or repair the Loſs of Individuals, for Death is now fully conquer'd; they die not, neither *can they die*, but are as the Angels, *Luke* xx. 35, 36. *That Building of God, that Houſe not made with Hands*, (that is, the Reſurrection-Body, as ſome underſtand the Text) *is* eternal *in the Heavens*, 2 Cor. v. 1. And this is what I expect under the Notion of a Reſurrection: I ſhall have *a Body*, the *ſame Body*; this in Union with the ſame Spirit; which Union will be everlaſting.

A Second Meditation on the RESURRECTION.

The Properties of the Reſurrection-Body.

2. I Am to take notice of the Properties and Qualities of the Reſurrection-Body: And here I am aſſured it ſhall not be ſuch a Body, as it is at preſent, but far more excellent: *He ſhall change our vile Bodies*, ſays the Apoſtle, *and faſhion them like to his own glorious Body*, Phil. iii. 21. And what the Glory of his Body is, we may gueſs from that Specimen, and faint Reſemblance of it, at his Transfiguration; when *his Face*, as we are told, did *ſhine as the Sun*, and *his Raiment was white as the Light*, Matth. xvii. 2. Our Bodies ſhall, in their Meaſure, be like his; σύμμορφον, *of the ſame Form and Complexion*, appearing with a Splendor and Brightneſs, reſembling that of his glorified Body.

But what the Change ſhall be, the Apoſtle tells us more particularly, 1 *Cor.* xv. from ver. 35. to 45.

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He brings in the Philoſophick Infidel, propoſing his Queſtion, ver. 35. with Deſign, it may be, to ridicule the Doctrine: *But ſome will ſay, How are the Dead raiſed up, and with what Body do they come?* He anſwers the Scoffer with a Severity, due to his Temper, *Thou Fool*, &c. *q. d.* Thou thinkeſt to baffle a Doctrine, that ſtands upon a ſure Foundation, by an Objection, that may be anſwer'd from a moſt familiar Inſtance, which every one is acquainted with; *doſt thou not know, that which thou ſoweſt is not quicken'd, except it die?* Suppoſe Wheat or any other Grain be ſown, it muſt firſt die, that is, be ſeparated and diſſolved in the Earth, and melted into a kind of Jelly, before it ſprings up, and then God gives it a Body, as he in his Wiſdom and Providence ſees fit; a Stalk, an Ear, *&c.* and to every Seed its own Body; to Wheat one Sort of Stalk and Ear, to Barley another Sort, and to each a proper Body. He adds, ver. 42. where he begins to apply his Simile to his preſent Purpoſe, *So is the Reſurrection of the Dead*, i. e. That Caſe reſembles this: As the Seed ſown is not exactly the ſame with what ſprings up; for a Grain of Wheat is not the ſame with a Stalk and Ear of Wheat, and yet it is partly the ſame; for every Seed has its *own and proper* Body given to it; if Wheat be ſown, it grows up Wheat, not Barley or Rie; thus it is in the Caſe of the Reſurrection: *So alſo is the Reſurrection of the Dead*, where there ſeems implied,

1. That our preſent Body is a ſort of a Seed of the Reſurrection-Body. Whether the Phraſe concerning the Body, *v.* 42. *(it is ſown)* refers to its Production into the World, or its being laid in the Grave; the Reference to the after-Body is manifeſt; it is the Seed and Matter, out of which

the Reſurrection-Body, as it were, ſprings, and from which it is formed.

2. Here is implied that the Reſurrection-Body is in ſome reſpect the ſame with the Body that is ſown *(i. e.)* the Body which we now live in, and at Death lay in the Grave; for thus (in the Simile) *God gives*, ſays the Apoſtle, *to every Seed its own Body.*

3. Here is alſo implied, That it ſhall undergo a conſiderable Change, and conſequently, not be *abſolutely the ſame:* It is ſo the ſame, as yet to admit of a Difference; *That which thou ſoweſt, thou ſoweſt not that Body, that ſhall be*, v. 37. It is ſown bare Grain of Wheat, *&c.* but when it ſprings up, it is variouſly changed; and thus it ſhall be with our Body; it ſhall be changed, and wherein, he tells us in Four Particulars, *v.* 42, 43, 44. *It is ſown in Corruption, it is raiſed in Incorruption; it is ſown in Diſhonour, it is raiſed in Glory; it is ſown in Weakneſs, it is raiſed in Power; it is ſown a natural Body, it is raiſed a ſpiritual Body.*

1. *It is ſown in Corruption.* It is a periſhing dying Thing, having Principles of Death and Corruption in it; therefore called by the Apoſtle, *Rom.* viii. 11. *a mortal Body*; and in this Chapter, 1 *Cor.* xv. 54. *this mortal*; its very Principles tend to Deſtruction; nor can it ſubſiſt without conſtant Suſtentation, and conſtant Influence from an Agent and Power without it ſelf, to preſerve it from the Ruin its own Principles would infer; but it ſhall be raiſed *in Incorruption*, having no internal Principles of Death remaining; hence 'tis ſaid of the Children of the Reſurrection, that they *cannot die* any more, *Luke* xx. 36.

2. *It is ſown in Diſhonour.* 'Tis a vile Body, σῶμα ταπεινώσεως, Phil. iii. 21. *a Body of Humiliation and Abaſement*, ſuited to the preſent lapſed

State of the Soul; it not only has, what the Apoſtle calls, *uncomely Parts*, 1 Cor. xii. 23. but is ſubject to Pains, Weakneſs, and often humbled by Deformity; we are forced at great Expence to repair it, that it may be kept tenantable; to cloath and adorn it, that it may not offend; and no ſooner is it deſerted by the vital Principle, but it becomes a loathſome Carcaſe: *Let me bury my Dead*, ſays *Abraham, out of my Sight:* But it *is raiſed in Glory*; hence at the Reſurrection the Righteous *ſhall ſhine as the Brightneſs of the Firmament, and as the Stars for ever and ever*, Dan. xii. 3. *They ſhall ſhine forth as the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father*, Matth. xiii. 43. Their Body ſhall be a Celeſtial Body, having a Brightneſs and Luſtre upon it, agreeable to its celeſtial State: Thus Chriſt ſhall transform it, when he raiſeth it again, *according to the Working, whereby he is able to ſubdue all Things under himſelf:* Nor is it improbable that the glorified Spirit, which returns to reſide in it, will contribute ſomething hereunto, and communicate a Luſtre to the Body.

" If (ſays one) our Soul, when overjoyed, can " fill our Eyes with ſuch ſprightly flames, over- " ſpread our Countenances, and paint our Faces " with ſuch a ſerene and florid Air, what a Change " will it make in our Reſurrection-Body; which " being incomparably more fine and ſubtil than " this Body, will be far more pliable to the Mo- " tions of the Soul: When therefore the happy " Soul ſhall receive the rais'd, refin'd Body, ra- " viſh'd with Joy unſpeakable; how will its ac- " tive Joys ſhine thro', and overſpread it with an " amiable Glory?

Scot Chriſtian Life. Part. 1. p. 1199.

When *Moſes* had been with God in the Mount, the Rays of Divine Light and Glory, that little Taſte of Heaven, communicated by a ſhort Interview with the bleſſed God, made his Face ſhine,

and

and gave it ſo ſtrong a Luſtre, that the Children of *Iſrael* were dazzled with it, and ſo awed with thoſe Beams of Majeſty, that he was forc'd to vail his Face, that they might behold it, and converſe with him, as at other times, *Exod.* xxxiv. 30. Some have thought this Glory continued on *Moſes*'s Countenance till his Death: That it continued a conſiderable Time, is intimated, *v.* 34, 35. 'tis probable for half a Year at leaſt; that is, till he had ſet up the Tabernacle, and deliver'd the Laws he had receiv'd: The like we read of *Stephen*, upon a ſpecial Manifeſtation of God to him, *Acts* vi. 15. his Body receiv'd ſome Impreſſions of Glory; *his Face ſhone as the Face of an Angel*: Now as this Transformation was, I ſuppoſe, owing, in part at leaſt, to the inward Senſation, Frame and Temper of the Mind, and not wholly to any external Impreſſions on the Body, it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe a Spirit returning from Heaven, filled with the Light and Glory of that State, will more wonderfully transform. In ſhort, I reckon the Glory of the Reſurrection-Body will be effected by an immediate divine ſupernatural Power, which the triumphant joyous happy State of the Soul will contribute to.

3. It is ſown *in Weakneſs*, that is, in a Condition of great Frailty and Infirmity; eaſily fatigued, ſoon waſted, decay'd and ſpent: In the preſent State of our Bodies, how little can we do? How little can we bear or ſuffer? We dwell in Houſes of *Clay, whoſe Foundation is in the Duſt, which are cruſhed before the Moth*, Job iv. 19. but it is raiſed *in Power*, full of Life, Vigour and Strength; ſo that it ſhall ſubſiſt for ever without Decay; move for ever without Wearineſs; faſt and wake for ever without the Demands of Food and Sleep: It will have a Firmneſs and Vivacity in it; ſuch as will render it a fit Inſtrument of a glorified Spirit;

ſtrong

ſtrong enough to ſupport its Joys, and ſerve it in its Operations: Heaven is a State of eternal uninterrupted Religion; they reſt not Night and Day, ſaying, *Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God Almighty.* Rev. iv. 8. And they have Bodies ſuited to their Imployment. How ſoon, alas! am I now weary in (if not of) the Service of God: If I find the Spirit willing, I ſoon find the Fleſh weak; I can't watch with my Lord and Maſter a few Hours, but this Body begins to flag, to feel its Burden, and ſuccumb under it; I am forc'd to ſuſpend Operation, demand a Pauſe, ſubmit to a ſort of Death to recruit its Strength, and reſtore its exhauſted Spirits: But the Reſurrection-Body will have no Incumbrance of this Kind; it will languiſh no more; be weary no more, but be raiſed *in Power*, with Life and Activity; ſo as never to deſert the Soul in its moſt intenſe and vigorous Exerciſes.

4. It is ſown *a Natural* or Animal Body (σῶμα ψυχικὸν) *i. e.* adapted to this lower ſenſitive animal Life; ſuſtain'd by Meat, Drink and Sleep, and conſtantly depending thereon; a Body with Affections, Paſſions, Appetites and Inclinations, groſs and ſenſual, and of the ſame kind with thoſe of the Brutes; on which account alſo it may be called *a vile Body*, or a Body of humbling: For how low do we often ſtoop to gratify the Appetites of the Body, and in Compliance with its Cravings? How wilt thou bluſh, oh my Soul! How wilt thou be aſhamed, when out of the Body, among the pure Intelligences of the other State, to think to what mean Drudgery thou once ſubmittedſt, when in the Body? *ſerving divers Luſts and Pleaſures* How thou laidſt aſide thy Crown, forgotteſt the original Dignity of thy Nature; waſt enſlaved to Senſe and Appetite, and tranſported with the Entertainments of a Brute!

But

But how happy the Change that ſhall be made, when it is rais'd a *ſpiritual Body?* refined from its Groſſneſs; when it ſhall have wholly laid aſide the Luggage, and Burden of the Fleſh; ſhall need no more the Recruits of Food and Sleep; crave no more the Pleaſures of Senſe, nor delude thee any more with thoſe muddy Delights, which the Senſes are the Channels and Inſtruments of: And then its Conſtitution and Frame will be ſpiritual, attempered and fitted to the divine, pure, ſpiritual Operations of the Soul; all its Members will be Inſtruments of Righteouſneſs: Thou wilt no longer, oh my Soul! complain of the Law of the Members warring againſt the Law of the Mind: The Body thou ſhalt then receive will be in perfect Subjection to the Soul: It will no more pinion, divert and tempt it, as it uſed to do, being improv'd into a ſort of an Angelick Body: Not but, probably, we ſhall have more of Body than the Angels; but 'tis likely, our Bodies will then reſemble their Vehicles, in Pureneſs, Fineneſs and Activity: Hence the ancient Hebrews ſtiled the Reſurrection-Body, *the Angelical Cloathing of the Soul*; and *Tertullian* calls it, *Carnem angelificatam, angeliz'd Fleſh:* Nor is this any Objection againſt the Reſurrection-Body, it being the ſame with this Body (that which is rais'd with that which is ſown;) for as Philoſophers agree, there is really no ſpecifick eſſential Difference in matter, the groſſeſt Body in the World being capable of Refinement to the Subtilty of the pureſt Æther; ſo that our Body may be the ſame, notwithſtanding ſo great a Change as to its Quality, in order to fit it [c] for the

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[q] *Pamphilius* apologizing for *Origen*, produceth ſeveral Paſſages of his Works, to ſhew he believ'd the Reſurrection of

the State where it is. And this, oh my Soul! will be the Condition of the Reſurrection-body, this, or ſomething like this: The Trumpet ſhall ſound: the Dead ſhall be rais'd, and we ſhall be *changed*; changed with theſe and the like Advantages and Improvements: *This Corruptible ſhall put on Incorruption*; be rais'd in Glory, in Power, and truly a ſpiritual Body. And with what Pleaſure ſhouldſt thou think of this bleſſed Day? With what ſolicitous Care ſhouldſt thou prepare for it! Lord, grant me a Part in the better Reſurrection?

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of the Fleſh, or of the ſame Body, and among the reſt what followeth——" As we retain, ſays he, the ſame Body " from our Infancy to old Age, tho' the Characters may " ſeem to be much alter'd, ſo we ought to underſtand that " the very ſame Species will remain in the Life to come, tho' " changed very much for the better; for it is neceſſary, that " the Soul which dwells in corporeal Places, ſhould have ſuch " a Body, as is ſuited to thoſe Places, where it lives; and as " if we were to live in the Sea, our Bodies would doubtleſs " be ſo order'd and conſtituted, as is proper for ſuch an Habi- " tation (as the Bodies of thoſe Creatures are, which there " inhabit); ſo now, ſince we are deſign'd for a Celeſtial Ha- " bitation, it follows, that the Qualities of our Bodies ſhall " be ſuited to the Glory of thoſe Places; notwithſtanding " this, the former Species will not be deſtroyed, tho' it be " made more glorious.

A Third

A third Meditation on the ſame Subject.

Proofs of a Reſurrection.

BUT is it certain, that I ſhall have my Body again, in this improved State? Things of great Moment, and that import a great deal of Comfort, had need be well eſtabliſh'd: Let me therefore enquire, upon what Foundation my Faith herein ſtands; tho' before I proceed, I ſhall premiſe two Obſervations.

1. That this Doctrine belongs not to the Articles of natural Religion: The Philoſophers of old, 'tis known, repreſented the Chriſtian Notion of the Reſurrection, as impoſſible and ridiculous. * *Auguſtin* tells us, there was nothing in the whole Chriſtian Religion ſo vehemently oppos'd by them, as the Reſurrection of the Fleſh. Of the Immortality of the Soul, ſays he, they have diſcours'd at large, and many of them aſſert it: but when they come to ſpeak of the Reſurrection, they not only contradict it, but maintain *it is impoſſible.* And this was ſo general among them, that *Tertullian* informs us, there was not one Set of the Philoſophers, but what denied it. They did, ſays another, πάντι ἀντιστάσεως τρόπῳ, with all manner of Oppoſition contend againſt it. *Pliny* * places it amongſt the Number of impoſſibilities, *viz. Revocare defunctas,* and boldly affirms, it is what God neither *will do, nor can do.* *Celſus* calls the Doctrine *abominable,* and inſults the Chriſtians as Madmen, for believing it. *Julian* the Apoſtate attacks them with his uſual Raillery on this Head. *Origen* ſays, that it was in his time the common Subject of Laughter among the Pagans; and I find, that when the great *Apoſtle,* preaching at *Athens,* ſpoke of the Reſurrection of the Dead, the *Epicureans* that heard him, *mocked,* Act. xvii. 32. And in the ſame Strain our modern

* Enarrat. in Pſ. 98.

* Nat. Hiſt. lib. 3. c. 7.

modern Deiſts talk of it. " It is contrary, ſay they, " to all the Principles of Philoſophy, that a body " which has ſubmitted to natural Corruption, " ſhould reſume its ancient Form." So that 'tis plain, there is no learning this Doctrine in the School of Nature, or arguing it out by Principles of Reaſon: Natural Reaſon can here do me no Service; it ſays nothing of it, unleſs in a way of Objection and Cavil; and yet,

2dly, I find this Doctrine has always been received in the Church of God, and admitted as an Article of their Faith, under every Diſpenſation of Religion. The *Patriarchs* [v] ſeem to have had ſome Knowledge of it: Our Saviour includes it in the Covenant made with them, *Exod.* iii. 6. compared with *Matt.* xxii. 32. And one would think, *Abraham* was not ignorant of it, when he ſo readily complied with God's Command, to ſacrifice his Son, eſpecially after what the Apoſtle has added, *Heb.* xi. 19. that he *accounted that God was able to raiſe him from the Dead.* *Job*, who lived in the Patriarchal Age, profeſs'd his Faith on this Head with great Aſſurance, in thoſe Words (as many interpret) *Job* xix. 25, &c. *I know that my Redeemer liveth*, &c. I am ſenſible the Text is very ambiguous, and has a different Turn given to it; but if the Doctrine was then revealed, it is not unreaſonable to ſuppoſe this good Man refers to it, when he ſpeaks of his Redeemer, ſtanding upon the Earth, and that in the latter Days, and of ſeeing him with

[v] Dr. *Hody* has taken a great deal of Pains, to prove, that the Reſurrection is an ancient univerſal Doctrine, deriv'd down from *Noah*, and grounded on the more early Revelation made to the Antediluvian Patriarchs; and that there were Footſteps of it among the Heathens, (tho' it is manifeſt they were far from believing the Scripture Notion of it)

his Eyes: *In my Fleſh,* ſays he, *ſhall I ſee God, whom I all behold, and not another* (or *not a ſtranger Eye*) intimating he ſhould have the *ſame Body* reſtor'd with the *ſame Eyes.* The vulgar *Latin* renders it, *I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that at the laſt Day I am to riſe from the Earth, and ſhall again be cover'd with my Skin, and in my Fleſh I ſhall ſee God.*

As for the Jewiſh Church, it was certainly an Article with them, that God would raiſe the Dead. *Ezekiel* grounds his Parable, concerning the Reſurrection of the Dead and dry Bones, upon the Doctrine of a general Reſurrection; which muſt ſuppoſe it known and current among them, *Ezek.* xxxvii. That it was ſo in the Time of the *Maccabees,* appears evidently from their Hiſtory: hence we find the ſeven Brethren, when put to death by the Tyrant *Antiochus,* comforting themſelves with the Hope of it. *Thou, like a Fury,* ſays one of them, when ready to expire, *takeſt us out of this preſent Life, but the King of the World will raiſe us up, who have died for his Laws, unto everlaſting Life,* 2 Macc. vii. 9. Another, when he came to ſuffer, ſtretched out his Hands, and ſaid, *Theſe I had from Heaven, and for his Laws I deſpiſe them; and from him I hope to receive them again,* v. 11. The fourth, at his Death, cried out, *It is good, being put to Death by Men, to look for Hope from God, to be rais'd up again by him;* adding, *as for thee* (meaning the King) *thou ſhalt have no Reſurrection to Life,* v. 14. [d] And when the laſt came to ſuffer, the Mother exhorted to

[d] If any ſhould ſuppoſe the Hiſtorian is the Author of theſe Speeches, or at leaſt gave a turn to them (as it muſt be granted is common in Caſes of the like Nature): I anſwer, we have no certain Proof of that; however it ſhews what the

to Conſtancy, from the Conſideration of a happy Reſurrection, encouraging him with the Hope and Aſſurance thereof, as *Joſephus* teſtifies: To which Purpoſe ſhe applied ſeveral Texts of Scripture, as *Prov.* vii. 18. *Wiſdom is the Tree of Life to them that lay hold of her.* Ezek. xxxvii. 7. *Can theſe dry Bones live?* Not omitting the Saying of *Moſes* in his Song, often urged by the *Jews* as a proof of the Reſurrection, *Deut.* xxxii. 39. *I kill, and I make alive.* Thus, as the Apoſtle ſays, (referring, probably, to this very Inſtance) they wou'd not accept of Deliverance, that they *might obtain a better Reſurrection.*

Nor did they, in their moſt degenerate State, part with this Article, (excepting a few that they counted Hereticks,) as appears from the *Apoſtle Paul's* Apology before *Felix*, I *have hope towards God, as they themſelves alſo allow, that there ſhall be a Reſurrection, both of the Juſt and Unjuſt.* Acts xxiv. 15. And how readily does *Martha* profeſs her Faith herein, when Chriſt told her, her Brother ſhould riſe again? *I know*, ſays ſhe, *he ſhall riſe again at the Reſurrection of the laſt Day*, John xi. 24. plainly implying, that this was the common Faith of the *Jews* which ſhe had been train'd up in. The modern *Jews*, notwithſtanding their Apoſtacy in other Inſtances, ſtill agree with their Fore-fathers in this Point: In their *Sephor Akkerim*, or Book of Fundamentals, (which is their preſent Creed, reduced into this Method and Order by *Maimonides* about the End of the eleventh

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the Doctrine of the *Jews* was at that Time, when this Book was written; which ſome have thought was before Chriſt. It is certain it was antient, being cited by *Clemens Alexandrinus*, who lived at the End of the ſecond Century, and beginning of the third.

Century,) the thirteenth Article runs thus: "I "believe with a perfect Faith, that the Dead ſhall "be reſtored to Life, when it ſhall ſeem fit to "God the Creator." And their Story of the *Devolution of the Dead*, or rowling of the Cavern [c], is a ſufficient Evidence they believed a Reſurrection; it being an Opinion and Matter of Belief with them, that the *Jews*, who are buried out of *Judea*, ſhall at the Reſurrection *paſs through the Caverns of the Earth as far as* Judea, and there riſe again.

What the Faith of Chriſtians is, and has been, touching this Article, needs no Enquiry; they have tranſcribed it out of the Bible into all their Creeds, and other Writings, where it ſtands expreſſed in the fulleſt Terms. *Clement*, in his ſecond E-

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[c] The *Chaldee Paraphraſe* on the *Canticles*, Chap. viii. 5. ſays, "When the Dead ſhall revive, it ſhall come to paſs "that the Mount of Olives ſhall be cleft, and all the Dead "of *Iſrael* ſhall come out from thence, and the Juſt too, "that died in the Captivity, ſhall come by the *Way of the* "*Caverns* under the Earth, and ſhall come forth out of the "Mount of Olives." Which Fiction of theirs (as ridiculous as it is) ſhews that they believed the Reſurrection of the Body, and of the ſame Body: They give it for a Reaſon why *Jacob* and *Joſeph*, who died in *Egypt*, were carried into *Canaan* to be buried there, *viz.* that they might be freed from the Trouble of the Caverns. And hence, to this Day, the richeſt *Jews*, in what Part ſoever they die, have their Bones carried to the Holy Land. *Sandy* ſays in his Travels, that whole Barks full of Bones are wont to arrive at *Joppa*, to be interr'd at *Jeruſalem*. And *Thevenot* † tells us, that the *Jews*, who live at *Jeruſalem*, give a Chequer a Day for Permiſſion to bury their Dead in the Valley of *Jehoſaphat*, that they may be the ſooner diſpatched in the Day of Judgment; which they believe will be held in that Place: And the Reaſon why they expect more Diſpatch, is becauſe thoſe who live at a greater Diſtance muſt paſs through the Caverns, which will require Time.

Hody, p. 70.

† *Travels*, *Part* 1. p. 184.

piſtle

piſtle to the *Corinthians*, admoniſheth them, that as in the Fleſh they were called, ſo in the Fleſh they ſhou'd come, and in the Fleſh receive a Reward. *Polycarp* thanks God, when he was bound to the Stake, that he was to ſuffer Martyrdom, and to partake of the Cup of Chriſt, in order to the Reſurrection both of Soul and Body to everlaſting Life. And to the ſame Purpoſe *Juſtin Martyr*, *Tatian*, *Irenæus*, *Athenagoras*, *Clemens Alexandrinus*, *Tertullian*, and moſt of the Apologiſts and Fathers. *Euſeb. l.* 14. *c.* 15.

In the Epiſtle of the Churches of *Vienne* and *Lyons*, wrote about the Year 177, to the Churches of *Aſia* and *Phrygia* (extant in *Euſebius*) they complain, "that their Perſecutors would not ſuffer the "Bodies of the Martyrs to be buried, but threw "them to Dogs to be devoured, and burnt them "to Aſhes, and then caſt their Aſhes into the "River; and this, ſay they, they did, as if they "could overcome God, and hinder their Reſur-"rection, through Belief of which they deſpiſed "the greateſt Torments." So that 'tis evident this Doctrine, however ridicul'd by thoſe without the Church, was always heartily embraced by the Members of it; Patriarchs, Jews, Chriſtians. And I am now to ſee upon what Foundation it ſtands, upon what Principles they received it, for the aſſiſting and ſtrengthening my own Faith. And 1ſt, I have very expreſs and clear Teſtimonies of Scripture to found my Faith upon; which I am the more obliged to take Notice of, becauſe as this is a Doctrine entirely depending on Revelation, ſo I find the *Sadducees* Hereſy touching the Reſurrection, imputed by Chriſt himſelf to their Ignorance of Scripture. *Ye err*, ſaith he, *not knowing the Scripture, nor the Power of God*, Matth. xxii. 29. The *Power of God*, that he is able to do it; and the *Scripture*, that he has declared he will

do it. What Intimations we have of it in the Old Teſtament, has been already obſerved: It was contain'd in God's Covenant with *Abraham* and the Patriarchs, *Exod.* iii. 6. *Job* is ſuppos'd to refer to it, Chap. xix. 25. and the Prophet *Ezekiel*, in his Parable, Chap. xxxvii. ſo the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* xvii. *ult. When I awake I ſhall be ſatisfied with thy Likeneſs.* *Daniel* mentions it in expreſs Terms, Chap. xii. 2. *And many of them that ſleep in the Duſt ſhall awake, ſome to everlaſting Life, ſome to Shame and everlaſting Contempt.* In the New Teſtament the Evidence is yet ſtronger and clearer; our Saviour ſpeaks of deſtroying *both Body and Soul in Hell*, Matt. x. 28. of the *whole Body* being *caſt into Hell*, ver. 29, 30. which ſuppoſeth a Reſurrection: He aſſures us, *the Hour is coming in the which all that are in the Graves ſhall hear his Voice, and ſhall come forth; they that have done Good unto the Reſurrection of Life*, &c. John v. 28. *The Dead in Chriſt ſhall riſe*, (firſt) ſays the Apoſtle, 1 *Theſſ.* iv. 6. *He ſhall change our vile Body*, Phil. iii. 21. And again, 1 *Cor.* xv. 52. *The Dead ſhall be raiſed, incorruptible:* Indeed the whole Chapter is employed in the ſame Argument, in aſſerting and vindicating a future Reſurrection. And, to mention but one Scripture more, in the Viſion *John* had of this great Scene, it is ſaid, *The Sea gave up the Dead which were in it, and Death and Hell delivered up the Dead that were in them*, Rev. xx. 13.

And thus I have a ſure Word of Prophecy to rely on: The Bible is the Source of this Doctrine; there I am to ſeek it, and there I find it: God, who beſt knows his own Purpoſe and Power, what he can do, and what he will do, has told me he will do this. May I reſign to his Authority! If any ſay, how can theſe Things be? Can theſe dead and *dry Bones live?* I may anſwer, with the Prophet,

Prophet, *Lord, thou knoweſt*; thou knoweſt they can, and haſt ſaid they ſhall. Lord, I acquieſce in thy Word, and wait for the Accompliſhment of it!

A Fourth Meditation on the RESURRECTION.

NOR have I only the Teſtimony of Scripture in this Caſe, which in ſo many Words aſſerts there ſhall be a Reſurrection of the Body; but ſeveral Arguments there ſuggeſted, which confirm the ſame Point: And theſe I ſhall briefly conſider, and therefore add,

2dly, The Reſurrection of Chriſt proves the Reſurrection of Believers; is a Pledge and Earneſt of it: This the Apoſtle warrants me to conclude, 1 *Cor.* xv. 13. *If there be no Reſurrection of the Dead, then is not Chriſt riſen.* And again, ver. 16. *If the Dead riſe not, then is Chriſt not raiſed.* He adds, Ver. 20. *But now is Chriſt riſen from the Dead, and become the firſt Fruits of them that ſlept.* Where he refers to the Law concerning the *Firſt-Fruits*, Lev. xxix. 9, 10, 11. When the *Harveſt was ripe*, they were to bring a *Sheaf of the firſt Fruits for a Wave-Offering*, with a *Burnt-Offering* at the ſame time: Nor might they eat *Bread, parcht Corn*, or *green Ears*, till they had made their *Offering of firſt Fruits*. But having done this as the Law required, the whole Maſs and Subſtance of the Harveſt was hallowed; this Offering of Firſt-fruits being inſtead of all the reſt, to which that alludes, *Rom.* xi. 16. *If the Firſt-Fruits be holy, the Lump is holy:* Now with Reference hereto the Apoſtle calls the Reſurrection of Chriſt the *Firſt-Fruits*; it having, as it were, hallowed the dead Bodies of the Saints,

and conſecrated them to a new Life. He roſe not only as *firſt* in Order, but his Reſurrection was a Repreſentation and Figure of ours; ſhewed not only that it *might* be, but that it *ſhou'd* be; he roſe as our Head; when his natural Body was raiſed, the myſtical was raiſed alſo; "by his Re-"ſurrection he diſſolved the Tyranny of Death, ſaith one of the Fathers, "and rais'd the whole "World (or Church.)" Which is no more than what the Apoſtle intimates, *Eph.* ii. 6. *He hath raiſed us up together with Chriſt:* He roſe for us, went to Heaven for us, as our *Fore-runner*, Heb. vi. 20.

So that according to the *Apoſtle*'s Reaſoning, the *future* Reſurrection of Believers is as certain as the *paſt* Reſurrection of Chriſt: *If Chriſt be riſen, we ſhall riſe:* The former of theſe is Hiſtory, and Fact; and I have the Authority of an inſpired Apoſtle thence to infer the other. And oh! my Soul, what Ground of Faith, and even Triumph, haſt thou in this great Event, the Reſurrection of thy Redeemer! Behold here a Type, an aſſuring Pledge of thy own! The ſame Power that raiſed up him, will raiſe up thee! Thy Saviour was dead, laid in a Grave, lock'd up in a Sepulchre, the Door ſealed and guarded, Men and Devils conſpiring to detain him a Priſoner there: But behold, he broke the Bands of Death, forced his Way through all Oppoſition, triumphed over the Grave! And thus ſhalt thou do, in thy Time and Order: *Chriſt the firſt Fruits, and afterwards they that are Chriſt's.* He is the *Firſt-born from the Dead.* Col. i. 18. And if he be the *firſt*, it implies that others ſhall follow; his Brethren *ſhall be born after him:* And how ſecurely mayſt thou depend on the divine Power for the Accompliſhment of thy Hopes; when it is the Power of thy Redeemer and

and Head, who *was himſelf dead, and is alive; and liveth for ever and ever*; and not only ſo, but *hath the Keys of Death and Hades*, Rev. i. 18. He is Lord over the inviſible World, over the Grave; can, and will, command forth its Priſoners: Yea, the Thing is already *virtually done*, when he himſelf was rais'd up; ſo that *if I believe that Jeſus died and roſe again*, I may conclude, that *them alſo that ſleep in Jeſus, will God bring with him*, 1 Theſſ. iv. 14.

3dly, It is ſome Confirmation of my Faith, that my great Lord and Maſter, the Firſt-born from the Dead, hath given Inſtances of his Power, in the actual Reſurrection of ſome of his Followers: We have ſeveral Examples of the Dead reſtored to Life again, by the Power of God, which may be looked upon as a Specimen of the General Reſurrection, as the Widow of *Sarepta*'s Son, 1 *Kings* xvii. 22. the *Shunamite*'s Son, 2 *Kings* iv. 34, 35. *Jairus*'s Daughter, *Mark* v. 22. the Son of the Widow of *Naim*, Luke vii. 11. *Lazarus*, John xi. 39. and *Tabitha*, Acts ix. 40. But as theſe Perſons roſe only to a temporary Life, as I ſuppoſe, and to die again, they may not be thought Inſtances pertinent to our Purpoſe, and therefore I ſhall not further inſiſt upon them; (tho' they ſufficiently demonſtrate that the divine Power can effect the Re-union of Soul and Body, and ſeem to intimate God deſigns the Dead ſhall have their Bodies again, and live in them again.) But that which I wou'd chiefly take Notice of is, the Reſurrection of thoſe Saints at the Time of Chriſt's Reſurrection, mentioned *Matt.* xxvii. 52, 53. It is ſaid, *The Graves were opened, and many Bodies of the Saints which ſlept aroſe, and came out of the Graves, after his Reſurrection, and went into the holy City, and appeared unto many.* Who they were that roſe,

the Curioſity of ſome has diſputed, though to little Purpoſe. It has alſo been a Queſtion, whether they died again, or aſcended with Chriſt? But leaving theſe Speculations, I ſhall only obſerve, that it is certain ſome roſe, roſe with the ſame Bodies, and therefore it is ſaid, *the Graves were opened, and they came forth*; which was after and upon the Reſurrection of Chriſt. Which I take to be an Illuſtration of the Apoſtle's Doctrine before-mentioned: Chriſt roſe as the Firſt-fruits; now, as a Token of the full Harveſt, in due time, behold ſome of his Saints, his redeemed Ones, preſently follow him: He had conquered Death, and he would have a few of his Servants and Members, as a Pledge of what he deſigned for all the reſt, ſhare with him in the Triumph. And oh! my Soul, here's further Ground of Aſſurance: Thou ſeeſt not only Chriſt the Firſt born, but others of thy Brethren are riſen; thou haſt therein, as in a Figure, thy own Reſurrection; diſmiſs, therefore, thy Fears, thy Jealouſies; let thy *Fleſh reſt in Hope*, follow them that are gone before in Faith and Patience, and with them thou ſhalt inherit the Promiſes.

4thly, I am allowed to argue a Reſurrection, from God's Covenant with Believers, and the Relation they ſtand in to him. God is their God, *therefore* they ſhall riſe; which is an Inference my Saviour has taught me to make, *Matt.* xxii. 32, 33. The Covenant extends to the Perſon, and ſecures the Happineſs of the whole Man: If I can upon ſure Grounds claim an Intereſt in God, as my Covenant-God, I may expect from thence a *compleat* Happineſs; that my Body ſhall not periſh, but that, in my entire Perſon, I ſhall ſee and enjoy God; partake of the Bleſſedneſs of another State. Further, Believers are Members of Chriſt;

They

They are under his Headſhip, committed to his Truſt; and he has told us, that it *is the Father's Will, that of all he has given* him, he *ſhould loſe nothing, but ſhould raiſe it up at the laſt Day*, John vi. 39. Not only no Perſon, but no Part of the Perſon; and therefore he particularly takes Notice, that that Part, which ſeems now to be loſt, really is not; *he will raiſe it up again.*

Further, Believers are Sons of God, and as ſuch are Children of the Reſurrection: Hence the *Apoſtle* makes their Adoption include in it the Reſurrection of the Body, *Rom.* viii. 23. *Waiting for the Adoption, to wit, the Redemption of our Body.* The Sons of God ſhall have their full Inheritance, all the Felicity deſigned them: Nor indeed do they look like Sons, whilſt ſo dear a Part of them, as their own Body, lies rotting in the Grave; therefore they are ſaid to be *waiting for* the Adoption, having not yet received the full Privilege, Dignity and Glory of their State: In ſhort, ſince they are Sons, they ſhall riſe again, their Bodies be redeemed.

Once more, they are *Temples of the Holy Ghoſt*; their Bodies are ſo, 1 *Cor.* vi. 19. and can we imagine he will ſuffer his Temple to be finally demoliſhed! The Apoſtle aſſures us he will not, *Rom.* viii. 11. *If the Spirit of him that raiſed up Jeſus from the Dead dwell in you, he will quicken your mortal Bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.* Whereupon the Spirit is ſaid to be the Earneſt of the Inheritance, until the Redemption of thy purchaſed Poſſeſſion. O my Soul! ſecure thy Relation to God, as his Covenant-Servant, his Son, the Temple of the Holy Ghoſt; receive and cheriſh the Spirit of Grace; thou haſt therein an Aſſurance of a Reſurrection to Life and Glory.

5thly, The

5thly, The Juſtice and Equity of God's Government affords a probable Argument for the Reſurrection of the Body: Not that the Body is properly *guilty or rewardable*; the Soul is the only intelligent, vital, active Principle; but it acts in and by the Body, and not without it: The Soul deſigns, the Body executes; the Heart is the Fountain of Good or Evil, but the Tongue expreſſeth it, and the ſeveral Senſes variouſly miniſter thereto: Our Members are, at leaſt, *Inſtruments of Righteouſneſs* or *Unrighteouſneſs*, Rom. vi. 13. Accordingly, we are commanded to *yield them to God, and to glorify God in our Body, as well as in our Spirit*, 1 Cor. vi. 20. In ſhort, *Man*, as conſiſting of Body and Soul, is the Subject of divine Government; our Actions, either of Obedience or Diſobedience, are the Actions of the *Perſon*, not of the Soul only; conſequently the Retribution ſhall be received in the entire Perſon: God, that ſaw fit here to govern us in the Body, will hereafter judge us in the Body, 2 *Cor.* v. 10. which one of the Ancients thought to carry ſo much Equity [d] in it, that he ſcrupled not to pronounce, *Si non Reſurrectio, neque Deus neque Providentia:* "If we deny a Reſurrection, we may as "well deny both God and Providence." "The "Body, ſays *Tertullian*, is the Soul's Siſter and

[d] Is it not abſurd, ſays *Origen*, that the Body, which bears the Scars of Wounds received for Chriſt's Sake, and which, as well as the Soul, endured cruel Torments in Perſecutions, and ſuffered the Puniſhments of Bonds, Impriſonments, *&c.* ſhould be defrauded of the Rewards due to it for ſo great Sufferings? Does it not ſeem contrary to all Reaſon, that the Soul, which did not ſuffer *alone*, ſhould be rewarded *alone*, and its Veſſel the Body, which ſerved it with ſo great Labour, ſhould obtain no Reward?

Co-heir,

" Co-heir, and therefore is to ſhare with it in its " Eſtate.

6thly, It is of ſome Weight in the preſent Argument, that I find good Men in Scripture referring to the Reſurrection, as the State of their conſummate Felicity, groaning after it, and longing for it: *I preſs forward*, ſays the Apoſtle, *towards the Mark of the high Calling, if by any Means I might attain to the Reſurrection of the Dead*, Phil. iii. 11. and to the ſame Purpoſe, 2 *Cor.* v. 2. *For in this we groan, earneſtly deſiring to be cloathed upon with our Houſe, which is from Heaven:* He adds, in the fifth Verſe, *He that hath wrought us for the ſelf-ſame Thing is God; who alſo hath given us the Earneſt of the Spirit.* And again, *Rom.* viii. 23. *We, who have the firſt Fruits of the Spirit, groan within our ſelves, waiting for the Adoption, to wit, the Redemption of our Bodies.* In both which Texts theſe *Suſpiria Sanctorum*, theſe ardent Breathings of the Saints, are aſcribed to the holy Spirit: And is it to be imagined, that God will baffle the Deſires he hath excited in us, and diſappoint the Expectations his Spirit hath given us?

7thly and laſtly, the Certainty of the Reſurrection may be argued from that Salvation Chriſt is the Author of, the great Redemption he came to accompliſh; which no doubt, extends to all the Evils Sin has brought us under: He ſhall *ſave his People from their Sins*, Matt. i. 21. from Sin, and from all the Effects and Fruits thereof; from the firſt grand Apoſtacy, with all its Penalties; from every Curſe, being *made a Curſe for us.* Now ſince Death was the very Evil and Curſe *moſt directly* threatned as the Puniſhment of Man's Diſobedience, *Gen.* iii. 19. it muſt be included in the Redemption and Deliverance we have by Chriſt; and conſequently, I may with great Aſſurance expect

pect from him a Reſurrection: So long as I remain in a State of Separation, ſo long I am in a State of Death, whatever my Enjoyment and Happineſs may be in other Reſpects: For what is Death, but the Separation of Soul and Body? So long as I want this Body, I have a Mark of God's Diſpleaſure upon me, and of my Apoſtacy; I am bearing the Puniſhment of my Sin: Nor has my Redeemer finiſhed his Office, and done the Part of a perfect Saviour, till herein he has delivered me.

O my Soul? commit thy ſelf into his Hands; *he is able to ſave to the uttermoſt*, finally and fully: *Though after thy Skin Worms deſtroy this Body*, he'll reſcue thee from the Power of the Grave, and ſhew thee the Path of Life; he muſt reign till *he has put down all Enemies under his Feet*; all *his* Enemies, and *thy* Enemies, the Enemies of thy Salvation; and then Death it ſelf, *the laſt Enemy, ſhall be deſtroyed*, be *ſwallowed up in Victory*: Thou muſt ſubmit to the Stroke of it, yield a while to this Conqueror and Tyrant; but *Thanks be to God, who will give thee the Victory through the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

A Fifth Meditation upon the ſame SUBJECT.

NOtwithſtanding ſuch full and clear Evidence for this Doctrine, I am ſenſible it is not without its Difficulties; it has been, and ſtill is fiercely attack'd, and the Foundations of it ſtruck at, by the Adverſaries of the Chriſtian Faith: The Apoſtle met with ſome in his Time, that thought it *incredible that God ſhould raiſe the Dead*; and many, in every Age ſince, have been cavilling againſt it,

it, and ſtill continue to do ſo: Now as I wou'd profeſs nothing as an Article of Faith, before I have tried it, nothing that cannot bear the ſevereſt Examination; I ſhall here conſider what is alledged by Objectors. And,

(1.) Some pretend it is *impoſſible:* This was the Cry of the antient Philoſophers, as before hinted, and is taken up by the Deiſts of our own Age: They tell us, that it is not conſiſtent with the known Rules of Philoſophy, for the Body to riſe: And further to incumber the Doctrine, they repreſent, "that the Particles of the diſſolved Bo- "dy are diſpers'd through the World, evaporated "into Air; and which is more, the ſame Matter "has, in Succeſſion of Time, compos'd, it may "be, half a Score Bodies: The Herbage which "grows from the Corruption of human Bodies, "is turn'd into the Nouriſhment of Animals, and "theſe Animals become the Food of other Men; "ſometimes Animals devour human Fleſh, and are "themſelves afterwards Man's Food; as in the In- "ſtance of the *Roman,* who fed his Fiſh with the "Bodies of his Slaves, that he threw into his "Ponds: Now here the Subſtance of one Man's "Body becomes the Subſtance of another; and "conſequently each cannot have their own, and "the ſame Body. And the Objection they think "yet ſtronger in the Caſe of *Cannibals,* who live "on the Bodies of Men." This is the Objection in its utmoſt Strength, and yet how little is there in it that need ſtagger the Faith of a Chriſtian, or that can render this Doctrine unworthy of his Belief? It might be enough to oppoſe to ſuch Cavillers, what our Saviour ſaid to the Sadduces, *Matt.* xxii. 29. *They err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the Power of God:* But I ſhall ſpeak a little more diſtinctly to it. And,

Vid. *Dr.* Nichols's *Conference with a Theiſt.*

1ſt, Let

1st, Let me obſerve, that all the Matter, which at any time compoſed the human Body, is ſtill in Being; *Philoſophy* will not allow, that the leaſt Particle of Matter is annihilated; there's the ſame Matter now in the World, that there was at the firſt Creation; the Particles that conſtituted *Adam*'s Body, after all imaginable Tranſmutations and Changes, *ſtill exiſt*, they ſtill are ſomewhere.

2dly, Every Particle of Matter is under the Eye of God, within the Compaſs of his Knowledge; he numbers the *Hairs of our Head*; he tells *the Number of the Stars, and calls them by their Names*, Pſal. cxlvii. 4. He meaſures *the Waters in the Hollow of his Hand, metes out the Heavens with a Span, and comprehends the Duſt of the Earth in a Meaſure*, Iſai. xl. 12. And why not the Duſt of our Body alſo? Shall we not ſuppoſe this within his *Ken*, and that however diſperſed, he knows where to find the Particles thereof?

3dly, If the Matter of our Bodies ſtill exiſt, and all the Particles thereof be under the divine Eye, is it any Difficulty to ſuppoſe he can collect them and unite them? (*i. e.* ſo much of them as is neceſſary to this Purpoſe.) They that deny this, muſt either maintain it implies a Contradiction, (which the moſt reſolute Objector will never be able to ſhew;) or deny that God is Almighty; which is indeed to ungod him.

4thly, As an Illuſtration of this Doctrine, and a Help to my Faith, I wou'd obſerve that God has diſplayed his Power in a higher Inſtance, and in a Work of greater Difficulty than the Reſurrection; I mean, *in Creation*: He that believes the *Heavens were formed by the Word of the Lord, and all the Hoſt of them by the Breath of his Mouth*, that he only *ſpake, and it was done; commanded, and it ſtood faſt*; can never queſtion the Poſſibility of the

Reſurrection; *i. e. that God can affect it if he pleaſe.* Nor is there any Force or Senſe in the Objection, that we cannot underſtand how it ſhould be, that the ſame Body, after all theſe (ſuppoſed) Changes, ſhould riſe again; for is not God wiſer than we? and cannot he *do exceeding abundantly above all that we can think*, or conceive? *Eph.* iii. 20. I might ask the Objector, whether he can underſtand how *Something was made out of Nothing?* how a Rib out of *Adam*'s Side made a Woman? how the Duſt of the Ground was at firſt formed into the Body of a Man, into Fleſh, Skin, Hair, Bones, Sinews, Veins, Arteries, *&c.?* Suppoſe one of us had been created juſt before the Matter of the World, and had beheld that *Chaos* mentioned, *Gen.* i. 2. *without Form, and void*; would it not have been as incredible, that from hence ſhould have proceeded ſuch a Number of Creatures, in different Shapes, with Variety of Organs, Voices, Colours, *&c.* as incredible, I ſay, as any thing in the Doctrine of the Reſurrection? So that whatever others do, the Chriſtian needs make no Difficulty of this Doctrine: Who can queſtion the Power of that God, who by his ſovereign Fiat and Word made a World; and particularly the curious Machine of this human Body out of the Duſt?

5thly, As to the Objection that relates to the *Cannibals, &c. viz.* "that the Subſtance of one "Man's Body becomes the Subſtance of another," the ſame Anſwer is ſufficient; no Particle of Matter is loſt, whatever Changes it paſſes through: And God can make the Separation, command back, and ſummon together what is neceſſary, in order to accompliſh his own Promiſe. Beſides, (according to the Obſervation of *Sanctorius*) not above a fiftieth Part of what we eat turns to Nouriſhment, (to which the Liquids alſo contribute a conſiderable

ſiderable Share,) and can be thought to incorporate with us: So that there are above forty nine Parts remaining, in the Caſe here objected, to be the Matter of the Reſurrection-Body. But I need not puzzle my ſelf with Intricacies of this Nature; I may here, with Safety and Honour too, retreat to the divine Power: God can raiſe and reſtore the Body, unite the ſcattered Duſt, and he has ſaid he will; and there I reſt.

(2.) Some object againſt the Reſurrection of the ſame Body, with the ſame Members and Parts, *that there will be no Uſe of theſe Members in the other State:* We ſhall, ſay they, have no Occaſion for ſuch a Body as we have now, why therefore ſhould we expect it? But this is no ſufficient Argument againſt our Doctrine; for though the Members and Faculties of the Reſurrection-Body, ſhall not ſerve for the ſame Purpoſes as at preſent, it doth not follow, it ſhall be raiſed without them: "Our "Saviour's Body, after his Reſurrection, had no "Need of Nouriſhment; yet it was raiſed again "with its natural Inſtruments of eating and drinking; which he once actually us'd, to aſſure his "Diſciples of the Reality of his Reſurrection; "and though theſe Parts are now uſeleſs to him, "as to that particular Animal Operation, his Soul "may uſe them for other Purpoſes, to us unknown, and peculiar to his glorified State."

†Dr. *Scot.* My † Author adds, "Since Chriſt's glorious Re"ſurrection-Body is repreſented as the Pattern of "ours, (*Phil.* iii. 21.) we may infer, that ours "ſhall riſe, as his did, with all the Parts of an "human Body;" though I preſume 'tis not neceſſary to aſſert thus much: the Doctrine of the Reſurrection, and Identity, or Sameneſs of the Body, doth not require it: The Members and Senſes of our preſent Body are, no queſtion, peculiarly

culiarly adapted to our preſent State, both of Operation and Enjoyment: What Change there may be in this Reſpect hereafter, I know not, (*i. e.*) whether we ſhall have all the ſame Parts and Members, and in the ſame Form: This I leave among the Secrets of the other World, not revealed in this; the Body may be the ſame eſſentially, and in Subſtance, notwithſtanding any Alteration in this and other Inſtances.

3dly, 'Tis objected, That the Body is ſo great a Clog and Burden to the Soul, that it can be no Advantage to us; no Part of our Happineſs to receive it again, and therefore we have no Reaſon to deſire it. The *Philoſophers*, eſpecially the *Platoniſts*, us'd to repreſent it, in their Diſcourſes, *as the Priſon, the Sepulchre of the Mind*, and accordingly placed the chief Felicity of Man in a perfect Freedom from all Body, and all Commerce with Matter: But this Objection is wholly grounded upon a Miſtake, as if the Reſurrection Body ſhould be like this preſent vile Body of ours: Whereas it ſhall be changed, as the Apoſtle aſſures us, 1 *Cor.* xv. 35, *&c.* It ſhall be rais'd *in Power*, rais'd *a Spiritual Body*: If it was once a Priſon, it ſhall be turned into a Palace; a Glorious Building of God! Such as the Owner will return to, not only without Reluctancy, but with Pleaſure and Triumph.

But (4thly) The Apoſtle's Authority is pretended againſt the Reſurrection *of the ſame Body. Thou ſoweſt not*, ſays he, *that Body that ſhall be; God giveth it a Body as pleaſeth him*, 1 Cor. xv. 37, 38. I anſwer, the Apoſtle ſpeaks there directly of the Grain of Corn, ſown in the Earth, and his Deſign is to illuſtrate the Doctrine of the Reſurrection thereby, and to intimate, as the Grain of Corn, after 'tis diſſolved in the Ground, becomes by the Power of God a Stalk, Ear, *&c.* So by the Power

of God alſo, this Body of ours ſhall be reſtored, tho' changed and improved as there expreſſed: God gives to every Seed *its own Body*, though 'tis not bare Grain (the individual Seed as it was) that ſprings up: Our Bodies will be the *ſame*; not abſolutely the ſame; for Fleſh and Blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God; they ſhall be changed; God will give us a Body *as pleaſeth him*, as is intimated (in the *ſimile*) of the Grain of Corn; a Body ſo improved and refined, as God ſhall appoint; but yet to every Seed its *own Body*: In ſhort, as the Saints, that are alive at his coming ſhall be changed, but not loſe their Bodies, or have other Bodies ſubſtituted in their Room; ſo we have reaſon to think it ſhall be with the dead Saints; both ſhall have their own Bodies, but changed Bodies. This the Apoſtle ſignified, 1 *Cor.* xv. 51, 52. *Behold I ſhew you a Myſtery; we ſhall not all ſleep, but we ſhall be changed in a Moment, in the twinkling of an Eye, at the laſt Trump; for the Trumpet ſhall ſound, and the Dead ſhall be raiſed incorruptible, and we ſhall be changed; both the Live and the Dead ſhall have Bodies*, their own Bodies; tho both *ſhall be changed* and made *incorruptible*, that they may *inherit the Kingdom of God*

And thus, oh my Soul! thou ſeeſt thy Way clear; and the Doctrine freed, in a good Meaſure, from all Difficulties; ſo that nothing remains, that need in the leaſt diſturb thy Mind, or diſcourage thy Faith: Say not, can theſe dry and dead Bones live? Thy God knows they can, and has declared they ſhall: Diſmiſs therefore all Suſpicions; don't ſtagger at the promiſe through Unbelief; but being ſtrong in Faith give Glory to God. *Lord, I believe, help thou my Unbelief!*

A Sixth

A Sixth Meditation on the RESURRECTION.

And now, O my Soul, improve this important Doctrine for thy Inſtruction, Comfort, and Quickening. *Application.*

The INSTRUCTION.

AND (1.) I can't but infer the Excellency of the Chriſtian Religion, and the exceeding Advantage and Happineſs of thoſe that are called to the Profeſſion of it. The Heathen World knew but little of a future State, of the Soul's Subſiſtence after this Life, and nothing of a Reſurrection; nor indeed was it ever fully revealed, till the glorious Author of it *brought Life and Immortality to Light by his Goſpel.* The Church of old had ſome obſcurer Intimations of it: but we have, and *we only* have the Doctrine in a diſtinct, clear Light: We know more of the Manner and Circumſtances of the Reſurrection; the Nature of the Reſurrection-Body, than was ever revealed before. We know that we ſhall riſe; how; (in ſome meaſure) by whom; and to what. O my Soul! bleſs God for that Diſpenſation of Light and Grace thou art under; that thou art begotten again to a *lively* Hope, by the Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt from the Dead: Thou now ſeeſt, what many Prophets and righteous Men deſired to ſee, and ſaw not; poſſeſſeſt and enjoyeſt that Day, which *Abraham* view'd at a Diſtance, *afar off*, with ſo much Pleaſure. Be thankful, that he, who hath determined the Times before appointed, and the Bounds of all Mens Habitations, hath caſt thy Lot under the Goſpel. *Conſtantine* thought it a greater Honour to

be a Chriſtian, than a Prince; a Member of the Church, than Head of the Empire. May I conſider my high Calling, and walk worthy thereof!

2dly, 'Tis plain from this Doctrine, that 'tis no Reproach to a Chriſtian, that he profeſſes to believe the Certainty and Reality of ſome Things, the *Manner* and Circumſtances of which he doth not underſtand; (though at the ſame Time every one, that allows himſelf to conſider, muſt grant, that where there is no diſtinct Knowledge, there is no diſtinct Faith; we neither know, nor believe without Ideas, yet) we believe many Things both as Men and Chriſtians, the particular Mode, and preciſe Nature of which, we are ignorant of: For Inſtance, the Reſurrection. I know, and am aſſur'd the Body ſhall be rais'd; be changed, and faſhion'd like to Chriſt's glorious Body: This in general I know; but I don't know what this fully imports; in what Manner the Dead ſhall be rais'd, nor (preciſely) with what Bodies they ſhall come; and conſequently can't here pretend to any determinate explicite Faith: So that, though I am to believe all God has revealed, I muſt not profeſs to know what he has not revealed; and with the ſame Modeſty and Caution ought I to proceed, with Reference to all other Articles, eſpecially of pure Revelation. O my Soul! vail to the Authority of God; never queſtion what God has ſaid; never diſpute his Veracity or Power in any Inſtance, with Reference to this Doctrine in particular; becauſe thou doſt not underſtand how theſe Things can be. In the mean time let Revelation at once found and limit thy Faith: Be not wiſe above what is written.

3dly, I am hence enabled to account for that Regard that has always, in the Church of God, been had to the dead Bodies of the Saints: The Solemnity

of

of their Interment, *&c.* I find *Abraham*, ſome thouſand Years ago, when a Sojourner among the Children of *Heth*, ſolicitous to procure a burying Place for his Family, and where particularly he might depoſite the precious Remains of pious *Sarah*, Gen. xxiii. *Devout Men carried* Stephen *to his Grave, and made great Lamentation over him*, Acts viii. 2. *Dorcas's* Body was *waſhed and laid in an upper Room*, Acts ix. 37. which was according to the Cuſtom of the *Jews*, and other Eaſtern Nations. *Maimonides* ſaith, they not only waſhed the Bodies of the Dead, but anointed them with Ointments, made of diverſe Kinds of Perfumes, and then wrapt them in clean Linen. The like was practis'd among the Primitive Chriſtians, ſometimes with no ſmall Coſt, as *Tertullian* takes Notice, in his Apology: We are as liberal, ſays he, in expending the rich Spices of the *Sabæans* on the Bodies of our deceas'd Brethren, as You (the Heathens) are in your Offerings to your Gods.

Now the Deſign of all this was, as *Prudentius* tells us in his Hymn upon the Subject *(circa Exequias defuncti)* to teſtify their Belief of the Reſurrection of the Dead: "Hence, ſaith * he, "'tis that ſo much Care is taken about Sepul-

* Hinc maxima cura Sepulchris
Impenditur; hinc reſolutos
Honor ultimus accipit Artus,
Et funeris Ambitus ornat.
Candore nitentia claro
Prætendere lintea Mos eſt,
Aſperſaq; Myrrha *Sabæo*
Corpus medicamine ſervat:
Quidnam ſibi ſaxa cavata,
Quid pulchra volunt Monumenta?
Niſi quod res creditur illis
Non mortua, ſed data Somno.

" chres; hence the Dead are waſhed, anointed, &c. " He adds, What mean theſe beautiful Monuments, " but to ſignify that what's committed to them is " not dead, but ſleepeth." And no queſtion, if Superſtition be avoided, and we neither pervert the Chriſtian Doctrine with reſpect to the Dead, nor inſnare the Living, by any corrupt Rites of our own deviſing, ſome Solemnity here is allowable: There's a Regard due to the dead Bodies, eſpecially of ſuch as die in the Lord; they are Temples of the Holy Ghoſt; and though at preſent caſt down, they ſhall be built up again, with far greater Glory; and therefore methinks, ſhould be laid in the Grave with ſome Diſtinction; and not as the Beaſts that periſh: In ſhort, we bury in Hopes of a Reſurrection, and thereby declare and profeſs our Faith in that Doctrine.

And O my Soul! improve Occaſions of this Kind, as they offer, for the confirming thy Faith, exerciſing thy Hope, and other Graces: When thou followeſt thy Friend or Neighbour to his [f] Grave, employ thy ſelf in ſome ſerious Reflections, ſuitable to the Subject then before thee; think of thy own Death and Corruption; that this mournful Solemnity will ſhortly be repeated with reſpect to thee: Put thy ſelf in the Stead of thy deceas'd Acquaintance. " What if it had been I? Shortly it

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[f] The *Jews* are directed (in the Office of Mourners) when they look upon the Graves of any of their Nation, to offer up this Prayer. " Bleſſed be the Lord our God, who form-
Pocok " ed you with Judgment, preſerved you alive; delivered you
Port. Mos. " up to Death; who knows the Number of you all; who
" will raiſe you up again; who will reſtore you with Judg-
" ment: Bleſſed art thou, O Lord, who giveſt Life to the
" Dead: May the Dead live, with my dead Body may they
" riſe again.

" will

" will be my Turn: Whether I die in my full " Strength, with my Breaſts full of Milk, and my " Bones moiſten'd with Marrow, or die in the Bit- " terneſs of my Soul, when I can never eat with " Pleaſure, I ſhall, however, lye down in the Duſt, " and the Worms ſhall cover me. But, O my " Soul! there's Hope in Death; this Mortal ſhall " put on Immortality; the Trumpet ſhall ſound, " and the Dead ſhall be raiſed incorruptible: O " view the glorious Scene! hark, that's the Voice " of the Arch-Angel! Behold! Yonder he comes " in the Clouds!——

4thly, How glorious will the Reſurrection-Day be to good Men; and what an Addition may then be expected to their former Happineſs! There are many Circumſtances that will add to the Solemnity and Glory of it; as the Deſcent of Chriſt from Heaven in flaming Fire; the Voice of the Arch-Angel; the Trump of God, *&c.* which I ſhall not now inſiſt upon. The Reſtoration of the Body, ſo changed and exalted, will, no doubt, be a mighty Improvement of the Happineſs of the Saints: Indeed, I have, can have, but very imperfect Ideas, and Notions of the Reſurrection-Body; but I'm aſſured it ſhall be glorious, be raiſed in Glory: Tho' what that Glory is, I can but gueſs at this Diſtance. Some have thought that the Body of *Adam*, in his Original Innocency and Purity, was the Model according to which the Reſurrection-Body ſhall be form'd: " I muſt own, ſaith one, *Hody.* " my ſelf inclin'd to believe that our Bodies, in the " Reſurrection, (as to their Purity, Conſtitution, " and Livelineſs) will be the ſame with that of " *Adam*, when it firſt came out of the Hand " of God, with the Stamps of divine Wiſdom " and Goodneſs freſh upon it: That was the true " Exemplar, Original and Pattern of human Na-

" ture." Nor will the Glory of it herein (ſuppoſe it reach no farther) be inconſiderable; eſpecially if the Conjecture of a late free and learned Writer be admitted, *viz.* That our firſt Parents were, as to their Bodies, formed after the Image of the *Shechinah*, which he makes to be Light, organized in Human Shape: He ſuppoſes, that beſides the Form, Feature, and Figure of Man, they had a luminous Veſtment concreted with them, as their Ornament and Glory, the Badge of their Innocency, and Enſign of their Authority; and that, when after the Fall, 'tis ſaid they were *Naked*, the Meaning is, they had loſt this Cloathing of Light and Glory. But without laying Streſs on ſuch Speculations, I have Aſſurance, that the Reſurrection-Body ſhall be glorious, exceeding glorious, even in Faſhion like Chriſt's glorious Body. And O, what a Day of Glory will it be, when the Saints, all the Saints, ſhall appear thus arrayed! with their Bodies outſhining the Sun in the Firmament; with Crowns on their Heads, and Palms in their Hands!

Mr. Fleming *Chriſtol*, Vol. 2. p. 250.

No queſtion, the Saints will find themſelves in a Sort of a *New State* of Happineſs, when *now* they have receiv'd their Bodies again, in ſo wonderful a Condition; and that in eternal indiſſoluble Union with their Spirit. " The Re-union of Soul and " Body, ſaith * one, will be an Addition of Hap- " pineſs and Glory; for though we cannot gueſs " what the Pleaſures of glorified Bodies are, yet " ſure we cannot imagine that, when theſe earthly " Bodies are the Inſtruments of ſo many Pleaſures, " a ſpiritual and glorified Body will be of no Uſe: " A Soul and Body cannot be vitally united, " but there muſt be a Sympathy between them, " and they receive mutual Impreſſions from each " other; and then we need not doubt, but ſuch

* Sherlock *on Death*, p. 61.

" glorified

" glorified Bodies will highly miniſter, though in " a way unknown to us, to the Pleaſures of a " divine and perfect Soul; will infinitely more " contribute to the Pleaſures of the Mind, than " theſe earthly Bodies do to our ſenſual Pleaſures. My Author adds, " Now will be the Marriage " of the Lamb; this conſummates our Happineſs, " when the Body and Soul meet again in eternal " Harmony, to heighten and inflame each other's " Joys." This, and a great deal more may be expected to diſtinguiſh that Day, and crown the Felicity of the Saints. O my Soul! believe and look for that bleſſed Hope; wait for that bleſſed Day, for the Adoption, the Redemption of thy Body; rejoice in Hope of the Glory of God.

A Seventh Meditation on the RESURRECTION.

The CONSOLATION.

IN the mean time let the Proſpect of theſe Things, of the glorious State of the Reſurrection-Body, ſupport and comfort thee under all the Exerciſes, Troubles, and Inconveniencies of the preſent Body: *We that are in this Tabernacle groan, being burdened,* 2 Cor. v. 4. We groan and are burdened, and how many, how great our Burdens? The Tabernacle it ſelf is a Burden, and the occaſion not only of a great part of the Sins, but of moſt of the Sorrows of Life; 'tis a *vile Body*, a Body of Abaſement, *Phil.* iii. 21. *Fleſh, in which dwells no good thing,* Rom. vii. 18. *A Body of Death,* v. 24. How much do we ſuffer, even good Men themſelves, by Means of this Body? The beſt Saints on Earth know, and

and feel ſomething of what the Apoſtle complains of, and calls *a Law in the Members* warring againſt the Law of the Mind. Nor can they be delivered from this Law, the Taint and Influence of the Body, till they are delivered out of it: Sin that *dwelleth in us*, has, like the Leproſy under the Law, ſo infected the Houſe (the Body) that there's no Cure, till its pulled down, and caſt into a new Mould: We groan in this Tabernacle, and as long as we are in it we ſhall groan, and have Cauſe to groan: But here's the Conſolation, that this vile Body ſhall be changed. Shortly, O my Soul, thou wilt have a New Body; a Body in a New Edition and State, without any Pollution or Corruption, in which there ſhall dwell *no evil thing*; a pure ſpiritual refined Body, that ſhall annoy and incommode thee no more; of which thou ſhalt complain no more for ever! O ſolace thy ſelf in the Hope thereof!

And here ſtand a little, and compare this Body with that; this vile Body with the refined glorious Reſurrection-Body: Conſider what the one is, and what the other will be; and let thy future Proſpects ſupport thee under preſent Grievances. This preſent Body, it may be, is maimed, deformed, ſown in Diſhonour (in that Inſtance of it); but the Reſurrection-Body will have nothing of this: There ſhall be no Imperfection, or Superfluity remaining; no Diſtortion or Irregularity of any kind, but an exact Proportion and Symmetry of Parts. We ſhall be rais'd *in Glory*.

Thy preſent Body is liable to a Variety of Diſeaſes; is often a pain'd, languiſhing Body; ſo that ſometimes, with the Pſalmiſt, *thou makeſt thy Bed to ſwim, and watereſt* thy *Couch with Tears:* Thou poſſeſſeſt Months of Vanity; weariſom Nights and Days are appointed to thee. Nor is it only

only the Uneaſineſs of ſuch a State, but the Diverſion it gives from the Work of Religion, that's the great Exerciſe of a devout Mind; which is often like a skilful Muſician, who has broke his Inſtrument. Well, at the Reſurrection this Grievance will be over: The Inhabitants of the New *Jeruſalem* ſhall not ſay they are ſick; their Bodies ſhall proſper and be in Health, as their Souls proſper: Every Saint ſhall enjoy, what the Philoſopher reckon'd the greateſt Felicity Man was capable of, *Mens ſana in corpore ſano*, a ſound Mind in a ſound and healthful Body.

Thy preſent Body is feeble and impotent, ſown in Weakneſs; needs conſtant Repairs by Meat, Drink, Reſt, Diverſion, *&c.* If we are vigorous in Action for a few Hours, we are ſoon weary; the Body is jaded, and we are forced to pauſe, take Breath, and ſeek Recruits: Nay, muſt ſubmit to die, as I may ſay, that is ſleep, almoſt one half of our Time, that we may, in our Manner, live the other: But the Reſurrection-Body will have none of theſe Infirmities; will be ſet above the Neceſſities and Demands of this Body; we ſhall hunger and thirſt no more, but remain in a Condition of conſtant Vigour, Activity and Life. Haſt thou, O my Soul, taſted now and then of the Pleaſures of Religion, found Delights and Entertainments, ſuch as Strangers intermeddle not with, in the more ſolemn Exerciſes of the Cloſet, Aſſembly, *&c.* Alas! it was but a Taſte! Thy Inſtrument wou'd not ſerve long; well, but hereafter Things will be at a better paſs with thee; thy Reſurrection-Body will be more potent, be capable of the Joys and Work of Heaven without fainting for ever.

Thy preſent Body, how great a Confinement to the Soul? what an Incumbrance and Clog to it? 'Tis really a Diminution to theſe Spirits of ours, that

that they are forced to act by the Body; to keep its Pace, and depend upon it in all their Operations. Hence we are reſtrain'd, cramp'd, fetter'd! What an Impediment, for Inſtance, is the Body to us in our rational Purſuits and Acquiſitions? What ſlow Advances do we make in Knowledge! How muſt we bend the Faculties, and tug at it, to furniſh the Mind with a few Ideas and Notions; and when we have done ſo, how apt are we to loſe them? how hardly do we recover them, and bring them forth for preſent Uſe; and all this thro' the Infirmity of the Body, the Condition of its Organs, Spirits? *&c.* And who feels not the Clog and Burden of the Fleſh? How doth it at all Times pinion us? How doth it hang as a dead Weight to the aſpiring Soul! Well, at the Reſurrection this Complaint alſo will be at an End; the Body, I ſhall then receive, will neither hinder Contemplation nor Action; it will have no groſs Fumes to cloud the Mind, nor Heavineſs to depreſs it.

Once more the preſent Body is the Soul's (not only Priſon, but) Snare, tempting, deluding, inſlaving to Senſe and ſenſible Things: What Dreams, Shadows, Vanities, (ſometimes groſly ſenſual and impure) do Multitudes of poor unthinking Creatures purſue and place their Happineſs in? and this very much through the Influence of the Body: And even in good Men, where the Fleſh is not the governing Principle; yet, alas! How much do they ſuffer by the Entanglements of the Body? How doth it divert the Mind by its Pleaſures; draw away the Thoughts from more rational and divine Subjects? How doth it taint it by its Imaginations, and diſtract it by its Cares? repeating its Importunities, ſo that we are ſcarce at Leiſure to attend, either the Work or the Comforts of the divine Life. O my Soul! how art thou abas'd, humbled,

and

and even made vile by this vile Body? Don't the *Angels*, thinkeſt thou, regret to ſee one of their Brother Spirits, thus forgetting himſelf, purſuing a Bubble, and triumphing in the Pleaſures of a Brute! (as is often thy Caſe). Well, thy Reſurrection-Body will have nothing of this Nature in it: It will be of a purer Conſtitution; will have dropt all its Paſſions, Infirmities, and Luſts; will delude, tempt, enſnare no more: Thoſe Traces, which ſenſible Pleaſures had imprinted, will be perfectly obliterated, and will give no more Diſturbance; there will be no longer a Law in the Members thwarting the ſuperior Law of the Mind: Now the Fleſh luſteth againſt the Spirit; the Wheels of this noble Machine are ſometimes diſordered; hereafter they will move regularly, and in entire Obedience to the Intelligence that governs them. In ſhort, there will be full Concord between Soul and Body; all Harmony within; no more Rebellion or Diſorder for ever. O Bleſſedneſs! O joyful Day! Lord, I wait for thy Salvation! I muſt ſubmit to the Abaſements of my preſent Body for a Time; wou'd endeavour to bear its Burdens, ſtrive againſt its Affections and Luſts: (help me by thy Grace!) But, bleſſed be God, that as I look for new Heavens, and a new Earth, ſo a new Body wherein dwelleth Righteouſneſs.

The Eighth Meditation on the RESURRECTION.

The RESOLUTION.

MAY I be found prepared for this ſolemn, awful Day! The Trumpet ſhall ſound, and the Dead ſhall be rais'd, the Dead univerſally: *All that are in the Graves ſhall come forth*, John v. 28, 29. *There ſhall be a Reſurrection both of the Juſt and Unjuſt*, Act. xxiv. 15. But this is ſo far from being a Comfort to wicked Men, that it will be their Averſion and dread: The Reſurrection, with reſpect to them, is like a Goal-Delivery (as we call an Aſſize) when the unhappy Priſoners are brought forth to Execution. They *ſhall awake*, but 'tis *to everlaſting Shame and Contempt*, Dan. xii. 2. Their Bodies, it may be, will riſe more groſs and material than the Bodies of the Saints, and, no doubt, appear with extraordinary Marks of Horror upon them: And Oh! with what Reluctancy will they be dragg'd to them, and receive them again; the very Sight of which will powerfully revive the Memory of former things; and Union with them, will be like chaining a Murderer to the dead Body he has ſlain. *Chriſt*, 'tis true, wi l raiſe them; but 'tis as a Judge; they *ſhall hear his Voice*, and obey his Summons, *and come forth to the Reſurrection of Damnation*, John v. 29. The Reſurrection will be their Puniſhment, not their Privilege.

And hence 'tis, I ſuppoſe, that the Reſurrection is ſo often mention'd in Scripture *as of good Men*; as if none but they were to riſe, as *Luk.* xiv. 14. 1 Cor. xv. Rom. viii. 11. Intimating that 'tis matter of Hope and Advantage *only to theſe*: Others ſhall

ſhall be rais'd, but againſt their Will: They wou'd be glad never more to ſee their Bodies again; be glad the Rocks and Mountains ſhou'd fall upon them. O my Soul! endeavour that thou mayeſt ſtand in a good Lot at that Day: So act in the Body, that thou mayeſt not be aſhamed, or afraid to meet it again. O how important a Concern is this! Lord! help me to attend it. I know, as *Martha* ſaid of her Brother *Lazarus*, that I ſhall riſe at the Reſurrection, at the laſt Day. But ſhall I riſe to Life? Let this, O my Soul, be thy Enquiry and thy Care; and accordingly lay down proper Meaſures; fix thy Purpoſes, and reſolve to purſue them. Particularly I would reſolve (Lord help me by thy Grace!)

To endeavour after the Principles and the Improvement of a ſpiritual and divine Life. Such is the Depravity of human Nature, that we are ſaid to be *dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins*, Eph. ii. 1. 5. Not that we are in a ſtrict Senſe, and without a Metaphor dead; we have natural Life, and (what I may call) intellectual Life remaining: We have the Uſe of our Senſes, Reaſon, Judgment, and all our Faculties; but we have loſt our Rectitude, Integrity, Purity; our Taſte, Savour, and Reliſh of divine Things; loſt a Diſpoſition and Tendency of Soul God-wards, and are become earthly, ſenſual, Enemies to God in our very Minds, and in ſhort, reprobate to every good Work: This is our natural Death-State, out of which there muſt be a Revival, a Reſurrection; or Death will finally triumph over us. *You hath he quickned——Except ye be born again, ye cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* John iii. 3. *The Law of the Spirit of Life, in Chriſt Jeſus, muſt make us free from the Law of Sin and Death*, Rom. viii. 2. For *to be carnally minded* (to be under the Power and Influence of fleſhly Princi-

ples) *is Death*; it argues a State of ſpiritual Death; and will iſſue in eternal Death. Every true and ſincere Chriſtian is a Partaker of *a divine Nature, having eſcaped the Corruption that is in the World thro' Luſt*, 2 Pet. i. 14. O my Soul! ſecure this great Point, aſpire after higher and higher Attainments in the ſpiritual and divine Life. I may here borrow and apply that (Rev. xx. 6.) *bleſſed are they that have Part in the firſt Reſurrection*, over them *the ſecond Death hath no Power:* Lord, quicken me by thy Grace, raiſe me up together with Chriſt; Without the firſt Reſurrection in this Senſe, I ſhall neither eſcape the ſecond Death, nor partake of the future glorious Life; but if my Soul now live by the Grace and Power of God, Soul and Body ſhall hereafter live by the ſame Grace and Power.

I would reſolve to ſecure mine Intereſt in the divine Covenant and Favour: I deſire to yield my ſelf to God, and my Members Inſtruments of Righteouſneſs to him; to preſent my Body, my entire Perſon, Soul and Body, a living Sacrifice to God, to be his only, entirely, and for ever. I wou'd chuſe God as my God, my Felicity, and all; as my Sovereign, whoſe Will ſhall rule me, whoſe Wiſdom ſhall direct me; as my Portion, whoſe Goodneſs ſhall ſuſtain and ſatisfy me. Lord, in thy Favour is Life! I wou'd accept of Chriſt in his Mediation; ſubject my ſelf to him as my Lord, depend on him as my Saviour, and on the Spirit as *Paraclete*: I wou'd accept, renounce, reſign according to the Tenor of the Covenant. O my Soul! adjuſt and ſettle this momentous Affair: If God be my Covenant-God and Father, I ſhall live, live eternally; my Body ſhall riſe to Life and Glory: So my Saviour himſelf has taught me to expect, *Matt.* xxii. 31, 32. Lord be my God, ſay thou art my God, and 'tis enough; help me to

chuſe thee, and reſt in thee as ſuch, and thou wilt be my Salvation.

I would alſo reſolve to conſecrate my Body as a *Temple of the Holy Ghoſt* (ſo, in unſpeakable Condeſcenſion, the Bodies of Believers are called, 1 *Cor.* vi. 19.) Lord, come and take Poſſeſſion, fuller Poſſeſſion of me by thy Spirit: O prepare thy ſelf an Habitation; fit me for thy Preſence, and vouchſafe (O infinite Grace!) to *dwell in me:* Set open, O my Soul! the everlaſting Doors, that the King of Glory may come in: And *if the Spirit of him, that raiſed up Jeſus from the Dead dwell in thee, he that rais'd up Jeſus from the Dead, will quicken thy mortal Body, by his Spirit that dwelleth in thee.*

I would alſo endeavour (Lord, help me by thy Grace) to uſe this Body as an holy, conſecrated thing, and as expecting its after-glorious Reſtoration. Lord! may I never defile thy Temple: May I *poſſeſs* my *Veſſel in Sanctification and Honour:* may Holineſs to the Lord be inſcrib'd on every Member. O my Soul! learn ſo to govern and uſe thy Body, that thou mayeſt hope to return to it with Comfort: Beg, not only that thou mayeſt be ſanctified throughout, both in Body, Soul, and Spirit; but that all may *be preſerved blameleſs, to the Coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt,* 1 Theſſ. v. 23. Labour to cleanſe and purify the Body more and more; to keep it under, and bring it into Subjection; that it may neither ſo much cloud the Mind, nor ſo ſtrongly tempt it, as it often doth: If we *mortify the Deeds of the Body, we ſhall live,* Rom. viii. 13. " Holineſs is the only Principle of Im- Sherlock *on Death.* p. 65.
" mortality, both to Soul and Body; thoſe love
" their Bodies beſt; thoſe honour them moſt, who
" make them Inſtruments of Virtue; who endea-
" vour to refine and ſpiritualize them, and leave

 " nothing

" nothing of fleſhly Appetites and Inclinations in " them: All the Severities of Mortification, Ab- " ſtinence from bodily Pleaſures, Watchings, Faſ- " tings, hard Lodging, *&c.* when they are Inſtru- " ments of real Virtue, and not the Arts of Su- " perſtition: when they are intended to ſubdue " our Luſts, and not to purchaſe a Liberty of ſin- " ning, are the moſt real Expreſſions of Honour " and Reſpect to theſe Bodies; this is offering up " our Bodies as living Sacrifices; and ſuch Sacri- " fices ſhall live for ever; and the leſs of Fleſh " they carry to the Grave with them, the more " glorious will they riſe again." O my Soul! herein exerciſe thy ſelf; to ſubjugate the Senſes and ſenſual Inclinations: Think how inglorious 'tis, that this noble, divine Inhabitant (the immortal Spirit) ſhould ſerve the vile Body, fulfil its Luſts, and be Lackey to the Brute. The Philoſopher could ſay, he's unworthy of the Name of a Man, that would live one Day in bodily Pleaſures; and how much more unworthy is he of the Name of a Chriſtian, whoſe profeſs'd Buſineſs 'tis to prepare for a glorious Reſurrection, and a future Immortality? We ſhould be withdrawing and weaning from the Body, as much as we can; this becomes us both as leaving it, as we ſoon muſt, and as expecting it again in a new Form and State. 'Tis ſaid of *Plotinus*, that he bluſhed, and was aſham'd to be found in the Body. *Antoninus* calls Death the Deliverance of the Soul from the Impreſſions of Senſe, the Tyrannies of the Paſſions, the Errors of the Mind, and the Servitude and Drudgeries of the Body. O my Soul! learn of *Pagans*, how to eſteem and employ the Body; be not fond of it; fond of its Pleaſures, of its vain Titillations; but labour to live above it; to govern and keep it under, in a State of Subjection and Subſerviency

ſerviency to the Mind: Conſecrate it wholly to thy God, and therein to Immortality.

The ASPIRATION *and* PRAYER.

O My God! wilt thou aſſiſt me in this great and difficult Work? I apply my ſelf to Thee, from whom cometh my Help: To Thee, O Lord, my Strength and my Salvation: Confirm me more and more in the Belief of this important Article; help me to look *for the bleſſed Hope, and glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt; that I may know him, and the Power of his Reſurrection, being made conformable to his Death: O that I may preſs towards the Mark, for the Prize of the high Calling; if by any Means* (help me to uſe all proper Means, and to uſe them with ſuitable Zeal and Diligence) *I may attain to the Reſurrection of the Dead.* May I overcome evil Habits, Slothfulneſs, love of Eaſe, and all bodily Pleaſures: May I ſubdue the Fleſh, its Inclinations, undue Deſires and Appetites; keep under my Body, and bring it into more preſent Subjection to the Mind. Lord, ſtrengthen me for this Warfare; ſtrengthen me by thy Spirit with Might in the inner Man: Many are the Trials, Temptations and Dangers of this bodied State. I commit my Spirit to thy Tuition and Defence; fortify it againſt the Impreſſions of Senſe, and ſenſible Things; the Snares and Entanglements of the Fleſh; help me to ſtrive for Maſtery, and to be temperate in all things. O may I not miſs the Recompence at the Reſurrection of the Juſt: May the Sound of the laſt Trumpet be a joyful Sound to me, a Jubilee proclaiming my Re-

leaſe, and beginning a new Triumph; and *when Chriſt, who is my Life, ſhall appear, may I appear with him in Glory, and ſo be for ever with the Lord.*

A Meditation on the final State of HAPPINESS.

HAving prepared your ſelf as before, by a ſhort Ejaculation for the divine Aſſiſtance, ſet your ſelf as in the Preſence of God to conſider and ſurvey the great Subject propoſed, *the Happineſs of Heaven:* Your Text may be, 2 Cor. xii. 2, 4. *I knew a Man in Chriſt above fourteen Years ago, whether in the Body, I cannot tell, or whether out of the Body, I cannot tell, God knoweth; ſuch a one caught up to the third Heaven; and I knew ſuch a Man, whether in the Body,* &c. *how that he was caught up into Paradiſe, and heard unſpeakable Words, which it is not lawful for a Man to utter:* where, ſay you, I have to conſider,

1ſt, The Perſon concerned in this Matter; *I knew a Man in Chriſt,* meaning himſelf; otherwiſe the Mention of it here would not have been to his Purpoſe; which was to ſupport his Credit, with the wavering *Corinthians,* and baffle the Pretences of ſuch as endeavoured to undermine his Reputation with them; none of whom had been caught up to the third Heaven, as he intimates he himſelf was.

2dly, The Time of this Rapture, and the Viſions and Revelations that enſued; in general *above fourteen Years ago*; that is above fourteen Years before he wrote this Epiſtle: Some refer it to the Time of

of his Converſion; when he was ſtruck from Heaven, in ſo extraordinary a Manner, and brought to the Foot of Chriſt, with a *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* In which Poſture of Abaſement and Self-Annihilation, as I may call it, *he continued three Days* and three Nights *at* Damaſcus, *and did neither eat nor drink*, Acts ix. 9. And 'tis ſuppoſed, that during this Space, he had the Rapture here mention'd; but whether this be ſo or not, it is not improbable that now it was that, as he tells us, *he was taught the Goſpel by the Revelation of Jeſus Chriſt*, Gal. i. 12. If he was not now taken up to Heaven, he had a great deal of Heaven communicated to him; *Damaſcus* was his beſt School, there he receiv'd his Inſtructions, far more to his Advantage, than all he had learnt at the Feet of *Gamaleel:* And though 'tis granted this was an Inſtance of extraordinary Grace, yet God ſtill exerciſeth his Sovereignty over the Hearts of Men as he pleaſeth, and ſometimes in a Manner not unlike what we here read: He can enlighten, form, and frame them, to anſwer his own Purpoſes, by his ſpecial, powerful Influences; can ſubdue a proud *Phariſee*, change his Heart and Temper, remove all Prejudices, lay him in the Duſt, and turn him into another ſort of a Creature, and *this in an inſtant:* Lord, may I be as effectually taught to know thee, and my ſelf; taught thy Goſpel! I would be content to have the Eyes of the Body ſhut, that the Eyes of the Mind may be more opened.

3dly, The Rapture it ſelf, with ſome Circumſtances relating to it; as (1.) The Place he was caught up to *(viz.) the third Heaven*, v. 2. and into *Paradiſe*, v. 4. Whether *Paradiſe* and the third Heaven be the ſame Place, or different, is diſpu-

ted [g]; but as the Debate is not of any great Importance, ſo not ſo ſuitable to my preſent Deſign: I can't queſtion but there will be a conſiderable Change made in the State of Heaven after the Reſurrection; but that there are two diſtinct States of Bleſſedneſs *at preſent*, Paradiſe and Heaven, is a Suppoſition not ſo well ſupported, as ſome may imagine.

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[g] Dr. *Whitby* delivers it, not only as his Opinion, but the Opinion of all the Antients, that the third Heaven and Paradiſe are different Places: And * Biſhop *Bull*, in his Diſcourſe *of the middle State of Happineſs or Miſery*, has taken a great deal of Pains to defend this Notion: He makes *Paradiſe* the Receptacle of holy Souls, immediately upon the Diſſolution of the Body; and the *third Heaven* he makes the higher State of Happineſs, they are advanced to, after the Reſurrection. And ſpeaking of the Rapture in this Text, he obſerves, That the *Apoſtle* had repreſented to him, *firſt*, The moſt perfect Joys of the third Heaven: But leſt ſo long an Expectation ſhould diſcourage him, he ſaw alſo the intermediate Joys of *Paradiſe*. But methinks 'tis an Objection againſt this Notion, not eaſily to be got over, that we find the ſame *Apoſtle* declaring his Expectation, and Confidence of being with Chriſt *immediately* upon his Death. *I deſire to depart, and to be with Chriſt*, Phil. i. 23. Now ſhould it be granted that Chriſt, when he died upon the Croſs, paſs'd into *Paradiſe*, in the Senſe of theſe Authors, *i. e.* into *Hades*, or the ſuppoſed Region of Bliſs for ſeparate Souls: Yet after his Reſurrection, we are aſſured he went to the Right Hand of God; *he aſcended far above all Heavens*, Eph. iv. 10. We muſt therefore either ſay (1*ſt*,) That the Apoſtle was miſtaken in his Expectation or Hope: Or (2*dly*,) That the Privilege of being with Chriſt, at Death, was peculiar to him; for which there is not the leaſt Reaſon; not to ſay that elſewhere he mentions it, as the common Privilege of Believers. 2 Cor. v. 8. *We are willing to be abſent from the Body, and preſent with the Lord:* Or (3*dly*,) That there is no intermediate *Hades*, or *Paradiſe* diſtinct from Heaven, The *Apoſtle* expected after his Diſſolution and Death to be where Chriſt is (*i. e.*) in Heaven; in a State of Bleſſedneſs, indifferently called *Paradiſe*, or the third Heaven; tho' differing, no doubt, from the final State of Happineſs, after the Reſurrection.

* Important Points of Chriſtianity, *Vol.* 1. *p.* 21.

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2dly, What he met with there; *he heard unſpeakable Words, which 'tis not lawful for a Man to utter,* Ἄρρητα ῥήματα, Words he *could* not, or *might* not utter. I cannot but obſerve, that when it is ſaid, *he was caught up to the third Heaven*; there is no Mention of what he heard or ſaw: Which it is not ſo probable would have been wholly paſſed over in Silence, if it was another Place diſtinct from *Paradiſe*, and the more glorious.

3dly, The Effect this wonderful Sight had upon him; the Surprize of which was ſuch, that he knew not whether he was in the Body, or out of it, *i. e.* whether his Spirit was ſeparated from the Body, and taken up to *Paradiſe*, or he was carried up Soul and Body together: This he knew not, he ſays: And how then ſhould we know it? Or why ſhould we enquire after it? Who can tell us, if the *Apoſtle* could not himſelf tell? 'Tis like he was ſo raviſh'd with the unſpeakable Words, the Glories of *Paradiſe*, with the Company that aſſiſted his Paſſage thither, and entertain'd him there, that he quite forgot the Body. Some on Earth have felt a little of this; even when there has been no proper Extaſy or Rapture: Spiritual Things have ſo engag'd their Attention, arreſted their Minds, and filled their Faculties, as to raiſe them above the Body, and the little Concernments thereof. Of how great Account ordinarily is this Body with us? How many can reliſh nothing without it; value nothing above it, or beſides it? But the Words of *Paradiſe*, the purer Delights of that State, were we better acquainted with them, did we taſte and reliſh them, as even at preſent we might, would diminiſh the Senſe of theſe lower Enjoyments; would drown the Noiſe of earthly Things, and bring the Body into a juſt Neglect with us.

But I ſhall take a nearer and cloſer View of the Words, in which I obſerve two Things. (1ſt,) The Reality and Certainty of a future State: Here's even a ſenſible Evidence of it: For behold one *caught up to Paradiſe.* (2dly,) Some Intimation of the Nature of that State, *viz.* a State of Delight and Pleaſure, hence called *Paradiſe* [h], in Alluſion to the antient *Paradiſe*, or Garden of *Eden*, which was the Seat and Reſidence of innocent *Adam*. *To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the Tree of Life, that is in the midſt of the* Paradiſe *of God*, Rev. ii. 7. *i. e.* He ſhall partake of the Comforts and Pleaſures of Heaven, figured by the Tree of Life in the earthly *Paradiſe*. Heaven is the true *Paradiſe*; there's the Life and Bleſſedneſs, which the Garden of *Eden*, and its ſymbolical Tree, were only Types of.

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[h] The Word *Paradiſe* comes originally from the Hebrew *Pardes*; which ſignifies an Orchard or Garden: It is us'd three times in the *Old Teſtament*, and always in this Senſe: The *Greek* παράδισος is of the ſame Signification, literally importing a Garden, and more ſtrictly a Garden of Delights. Hence what *Moſes* in the *Hebrew* calls *Gan Eden*, a Garden of Pleaſure; the *Greek* Verſion of the LXX. calls *Paradiſe:* And from hence, in the *New Teſtament*, it is borrowed to expreſs the State of future Happineſs; as *Luk.* xxiii. 43. 2 *Cor.* xii. 4. *Rev.* ii. 7. Nor were the *Jews* unacquainted with this Notion of *Paradiſe*; they often ſpeak of an inferior and ſuperior (the earthly and celeſtial) *Paradiſe*; which the *Cabaliſts*, according to their manner of ſpelling Myſteries out of Scripture, think were repreſented by God's putting *Adam into the Garden of Eden*, at two ſeveral times, *Gen.* ii. 8. 15. The earthly *Paradiſe* being a Place of great Delight and Felicity, they made it an Emblem of the Place and State of Happineſs in the other World: Hence it is uſed to be the ſolemn Wiſh of the *Jews* concerning their dear Friend, *Let his Soul be gathered into the Garden of Eden:* And in their Prayers for a dying Perſon they uſed to ſay, *Let him have his Portion in Paradiſe.*

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In my farther Meditation upon this Subject I ſhall (1.) Premiſe a few Things concerning this State in general. (2.) Enquire into the Happineſs of it; into the particular Pleaſures that conſtitute *Paradiſe*. (3.) Prove there is ſuch a State. (4.) Make Application to my ſelf.

(1.) I ſhall premiſe a few Things concerning this State, in general: As (1ſt) That there is a State of Happineſs, that good Men enter upon, *immediately* after Death: *I deſire to depart*, ſays the *Apoſtle, and be with Chriſt*, Phil. i. 23. *When* Lazarus *died, he was carried by Angels into* Abraham's *Boſom*, Luke xvi. Which muſt imply, that he was in a State of Happineſs, whatever be the ſpecial, preciſe Meaning of the Phraſe; and therefore it is ſaid he was *comforted*, v. 25. Notwithſtanding,

2dly, The Pleaſures of *Paradiſe* are not *complete*, till after the Reſurrection, and future Judgment: Then it is that the Servants of Chriſt moſt fully *enter into the Joy of their Lord*, Matt. xxv. 21. Then the *Crown* of Life is given them, 2 *Tim.* iv. 8. *i. e.* They then receive their more perfect Joy, and final Crown: They have not before been openly acquitted and own'd: They wanted their Body, and ſo far were ſuffering the Penalty of the Apoſtacy. In ſhort, they have not, till then, the Happineſs of the entire Perſon; and, conſequently not an entire Happineſs: So that the moſt perfect State of the heavenly *Paradiſe* will be after the Reſurrection; not but that departed Souls are happy before, but not fully happy: Then Heaven will be moſt eminently *a Paradiſe*.

3dly, Let me farther premiſe, that though I am ſure *Paradiſe* is a State of great Delights and Happineſs, yet I can form but very imperfect Notions of it at preſent: *It does not yet appear what we ſhall be*, 1 John iii. 2. As the new Heavens of the Goſ-

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pel State were repreſented to the *Jews* by various Types; ſo the future Heaven is repreſented to us Chriſtians by ſundry Metaphors; in which, as was ſaid of their Law, *Heb.* x. 1. we have only the *Shadow of good Things to come, and not the very Subſtance of the Things* themſelves. We are not, whilſt in the Body, capable of taking in a clear, diſtinct Account of Heaven: However, God has ſeen fit, in ſome Meaſure, to vail and cover it from us. The *Apoſtle* in *Paradiſe heard unſpeakable Words; Words, which it was not lawful to utter:* He learnt more by that View of Heaven than he had leave to communicate to the Church on Earth; and, it is probable, more than any Language he could uſe was able to communicate. That World is very much to us, *Terra incognita,* an unknown Country; the Glory of it is *yet to be revealed,* 1 Pet. iv. 13. Particularly we know not, nor are we able to form any Conception of the Matter, how the Soul acts during the intermediate State, when out of the Body, and deprived of its preſent Inſtruments and Organs [i]. We underſtand not how we can ſee without an Eye, hear without an Ear, reaſon

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[i] " We know not how the Soul *perceives,* when out of the " Body; whether by the Help of ſome new ſubtiller Organs " and Inſtruments, fitted to its preſent State; which, either " by its own native Power given it in Creation, it forms to " itſelf, or by a ſpecial Act of the divine Power it is ſupplied " with; or whether it perceives and acts without them. Nor " is this ſtrange; for now we can ſcarce explain how we ſee " or hear, how we think or underſtand, leaſt of all how we " remember, tho' we have continual Experience of all theſe " Operations in our ſelves." I mention not this, as if it was with me any Difficulty to believe the Soul can act without the Body: 'Tis really a greater Difficulty (ſetting aſide Experience) to believe, and to account for its Union with the Body, and acting by it, than its ſubſiſting and acting in a ſepa-

Bull's important Points of Primitive Chriſtianity, *Vol.* 1. *p.* 87.

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ſon without a Brain, *&c.* We know not what the Reſurrection-Body will be; what Members it ſhall have, and what will be the Uſe of them; what Difference there will be in the Manner of the Soul's Operation, in the ſeparate State, whilſt without a Body, and in the final State, when again united to one. We know but very imperfectly how we ſhall be employed in *Paradiſe*; what Worſhip we ſhall perform; and how it will be perform'd. We know not particularly what Intercourſe and Converſe there is among the Saints in the other World; much leſs how 'tis carried on; how they expreſs their Sentiments, and communicate their Thoughts one to another. We know not what the beatifick Viſion means, ſo much ſpoke of among us, and wherein ſo much of Heaven is ſuppos'd to conſiſt: *We ſhall ſee him as he is,* 1 John iii. 2. But we muſt ſee him, before we know what 'tis thus to ſee him. We know not the Place of Heaven, know not where *Paradiſe* is, nor whether it be the ſame now as after the Reſurrection: Theſe, and a great deal more, are among the Ἄρρητα ῥήματα, the Secrets of the heavenly State. Learn therefore, O my Soul! to think and ſpeak thereof with Caution and Reſerve; don't irreverently tear aſide the Veil, and intrude into Things thou haſt not ſeen.

I'll only add (4thly) That which is *certain* concerning Heaven is its *general Nature.* 'Tis repreſented in Scripture by a variety of Metaphors;

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rate State. How a pure Spirit can unite with Matter, and by a ſingle Act of the Will move the Hand, Foot, or any Member; command the whole Body; uſe its Organs and Spirits in its Operations, is all Myſtery, and unintelligible; only we know by Experience 'tis ſo: And as we know *by Revelation it ſhall act without the Body,* 'tis no Objection againſt it, that at preſent we underſtand not how.

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as a City; a Kingdom; a Crown; a Crown of Life; everlaſting Life; the Joy of our Lord; *Paradiſe*, &c. All which import the ſame thing (tho' they give different Views of it, and ſhew it in a different Light) *viz.* That 'tis *a State of Happineſs*, of Honour, Preferment, and Comfort; a State of *exceeding great Happineſs:* The ſeveral Phraſes intimate this, and ſo we are aſſured elſewhere: *In thy Preſence is Fulneſs of Joy*, Pſal. xvi. *ult.* Nay, 'tis a State of *compleat Happineſs*, eſpecially after the Reſurrection; *the Spirits of Juſt Men are made perfect*, Heb. xii. 23. They are perfect in their Natures, and perfect in their Enjoyments: Their Deſires are filled and anſwered; they need, they crave no more. *When I awake, I ſhall be ſatisfied with thy Likeneſs*, Pſal. xvii. *ult.* This is the Scripture Account of Heaven, and what we may aſſuredly depend upon: *'Tis a State of Happineſs, of great and perfect Happineſs.*

A Second Meditation of HEAVEN.

BUT though this be what is moſt certain, and what the Scripture *more clearly* reveals, with Reference to the future State of Bleſſedneſs, Heaven or *Paradiſe:* Yet it gives ſeveral Hints and Intimations farther concerning its more *particular Nature*; and conſequently warrants and encourages my farther Searches into it. I ſhall not therefore take up with this ſhort and general Account; but under the Conduct of divine Revelation, the only ſure Rule in this Caſe, I ſhall proceed to the next thing propoſed, *viz.*

2dly, To enquire into the Happineſs or Bleſſedneſs of *Paradiſe*; into the Pleaſures that conſtitute Heaven, and make it *a Paradiſe:* And in general

two

two Things are manifeſtly included in it: *The Removal of all evil, and the Preſence and Confluence of all Good,* of every ſuitable Good, that concerns the Felicity and Perfection of a rational, immortal Spirit: Both theſe are eſſential to Happineſs. Every Degree of Evil is, ſo far, a Diminution of Happineſs: Whilſt I ſuffer any poſitive Evil, or want any ſuitable Good, I am proportionably not happy. So that as Heaven is a *Paradiſe,* a State of perfect Bleſſedneſs, it ſuppoſes, and includes both theſe; the Abſence of all that may be called Evil, and Preſence of every proper Good. There's *no Evil and all Good.*

(1.) *Paradiſe* (the Happineſs of that State) includes and ſuppoſes the Abſence of all Evil. Our Apoſtacy from God let in a Flood of Miſery, which has overflowed our World: That Sentence pronounced in caſe of Diſobedience, lies upon Mankind, Gen. ii. 17. *In the Day thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely die:* Die, *(i. e.)* thou ſhalt loſe thy Comforts, and commence miſerable. And tho' the divine Mercy and Grace interpoſed and ſaved us from the Execution of the Sentence in its full Latitude and Extent; yet it did not wholly remove it: And therefore we find, after the promiſed Deliverance by the *Seed of the Woman,* Gen. iii. 15. the Sentence, in part, ſtill ſtands in Force, as what was to take Place againſt the Offenders: The Serpent, the Woman, the Man, the Earth, all are curſed, v. 16, 17, 18, 19. This is the Caſe of Mankind, ſince the Fall: He's under a Curſe, in a ſort of a *Death State.* He's not only liable to a natural Death, which he muſt unavoidably undergo: But there's a Vanity and Diſappointment in all his Enjoyments; and a great Variety of Sorrows and Sufferings that attend him, and follow him, thro' his whole Life and Courſe.

(2) There's

(2.) There's a Vanity and Diſappointment in all his Enjoyments; the Curſe is, in this Senſe, univerſal: It reaches every Perſon, *Job* xiv. 1. Every Condition, rich and poor, *Pſal.* lxii. 9. Every Age, Childhood and Youth, *Eccleſ.* xi. 10. Every State, *Pſal.* xxxix. 5. This every one feels, and the longer he lives in the World, the fuller is his Conviction of it. Vanity and a Curſe has ſeized all our Comforts; mixes with them, and, like a Worm, ſmites the Gourd of our preſent Happineſs, that it withereth. I dare appeal to the Experience of Mankind, on this Head: Let *Solomon* ſpeak for them; who after he had tried all Concluſions, and had endeavoured to extract the Quinteſſence out of every Enjoyment; had gratified himſelf with Mirth, Wine, Women, ſtately Buildings, Vineyards, Orchards, Gardens, Pools of Water, a great Retinue, Men-ſingers, Women-ſingers, Inſtruments of Muſick, the peculiar Treaſures of Kings and Provinces; the Delights of the Sons of Men; in ſhort, *whatever his Eyes deſired, he kept not from them; he withheld not his Heart from any Joy,* Eccleſ. ii. 1. 10. *After* this Experiment, I ſay, *after* he had, like the laborious Bee, ſearched every Flower, he ſtands ſtill, as it were, makes a Review, and gives his Judgment of all, *v.* 11. *Then I looked on all the Works that my Hands had wrought, and all the Labour I had laboured to do, and behold all was Vanity and Vexation of Spirit, and there was no Profit under the Sun:* And what can a Man do that cometh after the King? Here was a Concurrence of Circumſtances that promiſed as fair for Happineſs as could be expected; a Largeneſs of Soul, a Fulneſs of earthly Delights, and a deſigned reſolute Improvement of all theſe Advantages, in order to Happineſs: And behold the Reſult and Iſſue! The Curſe follows the Enquirer, and he's forced to pronounce *all is Vanity,*

and

and Vexation of Spirit. He found what he himſelf declares elſewhere, *That the Eye is not ſatisfied with ſeeing, nor the Ear with hearing.*

This, O my Soul! is the Condition of Things here below; with thy ſelf, with the whole human Race: We may promiſe our ſelves Reſt, Contentment, Happineſs in this or the other State; but 'tis all Deluſion and Cheat: Riches, Honour, Beauty, Relations, Friends, all ſay 'tis not in us. No, there's a kind of *Death* that runs through all, blaſts all. We are condemned to *eat our Bread in the Sweat of our Face*, Gen. iii. 19. Condemned to Labour and Toil; (ſome in one Way, and ſome in another) and while we do ſo, the Curſe flows down upon us, often prevents the Succeſs, and deſtroys the Comfort of our Labour; takes the Sweetneſs out of every Fruition, and leaves it a *Caput mortuum*, a dead, inſipid, ſpiritleſs thing! Thus the World has found it, in all paſt Ages. I lay no Streſs upon the Fable ſome report, that as ſoon as *Adam* had ſinned, he was viſited with a *Phthiſis*, or inward Conſumption, of which he all along languiſhed, and at laſt died. But 'tis certain a woful *Phthiſis* has invaded his Poſterity; they have lain under the Sentence of Death, of Vanity, and a Curſe for ſome thouſand Years. Farther,

2dly, He's not only not happy, but really miſerable, expoſed to Sorrows and Sufferings innumerable. Could one view and behold the Inhabitants of this World at once, what a Scene of Diſtreſs would appear? How great a part ſhould we ſee lying in Sackcloth, and bathing in Tears? ſome afflicted in their Bodies, others in their Minds, others in their Eſtates, Names, Relations, and ſome in all: Sometimes a Cloud hangs over the Houſe, which is often diſcharging it ſelf, and then gathers again. The Relations in which we promiſe our ſelves the

greateſt Comfort, prove the greateſt Croſs *I am weary of my Life*, ſaith *Rachel, becauſe of the Daughters of* Heth, *her Son's Wives*, Gen. xxvii. 46. A Prudent *Abigail* hath a churliſh *Nabal*, as the Companion and Trial of her Life: An holy *Job* has one in his Boſom to wound and tempt him. This Child is a *Miſer*, that a *Prodigal*, this a *Fool*, that a *Rake*: And what with one, and what with another, how often are the thoughtful Parents gray Hairs brought down with Sorrow to the Grave! O the Grievances, Vexations, and Troubles of the preſent State! Who can number them? *All our Days are paſſed away in thy Wrath*, Pſal. xc. 9. We generally come weeping into the World, and in a great meaſure go weeping through it: And tho' the Paſſage is but ſhort, (the Cradle ſtands near the Grave) yet ſometimes we are ready to think it tedious; *are weary with our Groaning*.

Nor is this Death, Curſe, Vanity and Miſery confined to the Enjoyments of this Life, the things of this preſent World; but extends itſelf to Religion, to our ſpiritual Negotiations and Intercourſe. Our Apoſtacy has tainted the Mind; Death has ſeized our Faculties, and very much diſabled them for their proper Functions, for divine Exerciſes; which is true in a lower Degree of good Men, as well as others. They find Reaſon to complain of *a Law in their Members warring againſt the Law in their Mind; of a Body of Sin and Death.* Religion is become a *Warfare, a Fight*! and can't be carried on without Striving, Watching, Difficulty, and continual Returns of Labour and Pains: And after all, how frequent our Diſappointments and Miſcarriages? There's a Languor and Faintneſs in our Devotion, an Iniquity in our holy Things, an Imperfection in our beſt Services. So that even in this State, in this beſt State, in our religious Capacity,

we are ſtill Vanity, altogether Vanity: Indeed here's our chief Solace, our great Relief under the other Troubles of Life; and yet *even here* we are not without our Troubles and Exerciſes: If without are Fightings, *within* are Fears; the Frame often diſorder'd; the Soul diſinclin'd; the Mind clouded; the Heart dead, deceitful, treacherous; the Affections tainted, earthly, ſenſual. O wretched Man, who ſhall deliver! This is thy Condition in the preſent World; this the Curſe that lies upon thee, the Vanity and Death that purſues thee.

Well, in *Paradiſe!* O grateful Sound! Bleſſed News! There ſhall be a Deliverance; a full, entire, eternal Deliverance from all this! *They reſt from their Labours*, Rev. xiv. 13. God ſhall wipe away all Tears from their Eyes; *there ſhall be no more Death, neither Sorrow, nor crying, neither ſhall there be any more Pain, for the former things are paſſed away*, Rev. xxi. 4. Former Grievances, troubleſome Exerciſes, both of Body and Mind; all Sorrows and Sufferings, all Kinds and Degrees thereof ſhall ceaſe for ever! Sin ſhall be fully pardoned, and all the Effects of it aboliſhed; *there ſhall be no more Curſe*, Rev. xxii. 3. This, O my Soul! is Heaven; and how comfortable, how glorious a State? How amiable an Idea doth it give thee of it! Even this alone, was there nothing farther to be expected, is almoſt enough to make it a *Paradiſe*, and recommend it to thy Affection and Choice: That Flood of Tears, which ſometimes follows the Chriſtian to the very Gates of Heaven, ſhall then bid him farewel for ever; and nothing remain of them but a grateful * Remembrance to inhance the Pleaſures of the Deliverance. This, O my Soul! is *Paradiſe*: 'Tis ſuppoſed to it, included in it, and juſtly may be eſteemed as part of its Happineſs: After thou haſt been toſſed with Sorrows and Tem-

* *Olim meminiſſe juvabit.*

peſts, thou ſhalt there find a quiet Harbour, an everlaſting Reſt!

A Third Meditation of HEAVEN.

2dly, AS there's the Abſence of all Evil, ſo the Preſence and Confluence of all Good. Heaven is a State of Delight and Pleaſures, as the Word *Paradiſe* imports. What theſe are, I am now to enquire: What the Pleaſures, that conſtitute *Paradiſe*. And,

1ſt, There's the *Pleaſure of the Place*; which tho' it be not among the principal Ingredients of After-Happineſs, is however of ſome Conſideration. 'Tis the *New Jeruſalem*, the Palace of the great King; the City of the living God; a lively Deſcription of which we have, *Rev.* xxi. Its Wall is ſaid to be *great and high:* It has *twelve Gates, and at the Gates twelve Angels:* The Dimenſions of it *twelve thouſand Furlongs; the building of the Wall of Jaſper, and the City pure Gold, like unto clear Glaſs. The Foundations of the Wall of the City garniſhed with all manner of precious Stones. The firſt Foundation Jaſper; the ſecond Sapphire; the third a Chalcedony; the fourth an Emerald*, &c. Now tho' this may more immediately, and directly refer to ſome more glorious State of the Church on Earth; yet I reckon 'tis deſcrib'd in Terms borrowed from the triumphant Church, to which they more peculiarly agree; eſpecially when 'tis ſaid of this City, that *nothing there enters that defileth*, v. 27. and that it hath no need of the Sun, neither of the Moon to ſhine in it, adding, *The Glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the Light thereof.* Heaven ſeems to be ultimately meant, which is called a City, and *a City that has Foundations, whoſe Builder and Maker is God*, Heb. xi.

xi. 10. *Where* the Place of *Paradiſe*, or Heaven is, we know not, nor do we know what it is; only we may conclude, it will be a Place of great Glory and Magnificence, ſuitable to the Preſence that fills it, and the Inhabitants that poſſeſs it: This the Metaphors in general import. Nor is it unlike there will be a *viſible Schechinah*; ſome outward ſenſible Diſplay and Manifeſtation of God, ſuch as was frequently ſeen in the Tabernacle and Temple of old, and upon the Mount of Transfiguration: *The Glory of God doth lighten it*, v. 23.

And, O my Soul! how great a Pleaſure will it afford, not only to behold, but dwell in this Glory? *When the Queen of* Sheba *ſaw* the Grandeur and Magnificence of *Solomon's Court*, *the Houſe he had built*, *his Furniture*, *Retinue*, &c. ſhe was ſo ſurprized, that 'tis ſaid ſhe had no Spirit left in her, 1 *Kings* x. 4, 5, &c. *Happy are theſe thy Servants*, ſaith ſhe, *that ſtand continually before thee*, v. 8. But how much greater Entertainment may we expect the New *Jeruſalem* will afford? What a *Paradiſe* will that be, where the Throne of God is and of the Lamb? Where the divine Majeſty appears in the fulleſt Light, and where his Glory dwells!

2dly, 'There's *the Pleaſure of the Company*: 'Tis a moſt glorious Place, and will be ſuitably repleniſhed. In *Paradiſe* is *the general Aſſembly*, *the Church of the firſt born*, *and innumerable Company of Angels*, &c. Heb. xii. 23. There we ſhall ſit down with *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*; with all the Patriarchs, Prophets, Apoſtles, Martyrs, and Confeſſors, in the Kingdom of God: And Oh! the raviſhing Delights of ſuch a Society! What ſweet Counſel will the Saints take together? How will they mingle Hearts and Affections? What pleaſant Lectures will they read on the ſeveral Providences they paſſed thro', which concern'd the Church and themſelves

ſelves more particularly? We ſhall probably hear *Moſes* and *Elias* (who talked with Chriſt in his Transfiguration) hear *Noah*, *David*, and others reporting, with admirable divine Comments, the Hiſtory of their own Lives and Experiences.

Nor will the *Angels*, we may ſuppoſe, refuſe to admit us to the Intimaces of their Converſe: We ſhall, it's like, have the Honour and Satisfaction of diſcourſing with them about their embaſſies into our World; hear from them the particular Services they did us, in the Courſe of their Miniſtry towards us: How, at ſuch a time, they were ſent to ſuccour, ſupport, deliver, to admoniſh of Danger, ſuggeſt advice, &c. And Oh! the Heaven of this! 'Tis a ſort of Heaven to think of it at a Diſtance. *Socrates* comforted himſelf when he came to die, with the Conſideration that he ſhou'd go to *Homer*, *Heſiod*, and other brave Men, whom their Character had endear'd to him. So * *Tully*, *O præclarum Diem*, &c. "O bleſſed Day, ſaith "he, when I ſhall go to the Aſſembly and Con-"gregation of divine Souls, and particularly, as "he adds, to my *Cato*; when I ſhall depart from "this Puddle of Mankind to ſuch a Society!" But how much more excellent and glorious the *Cœtus fidelium*, the College of Chriſtians? How much greater the Satisfaction it will afford? eſpecially if it be conſidered, that as they are *all* Saints, ſo they are altogether Saints: Saints in their compleat perfect State; free of all Infirmity; among whom there will be no Shyneſs, Diſtance; no Pride or Selfiſhneſs; no Vanity, Paſſion; no remaining Corruption to alienate Minds, or taint their Converſe. This, O my Soul! thou mayeſt expect in Heaven: This will be one of the Pleaſures of *Paradiſe*. At Death thou ſhalt be gathered into *Abraham*'s Boſom, and live in eternal Communion,

*De ſenectute.

in

in delightful, mutual Embraces with all the Saints.

3dly, There's *the Pleaſure of the inward State*, viz. a State of conſummate Grace, and full Conformity to God. *The Spirits of Juſt Men are made perfect*, Heb. xii. 23. *We ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is*, 1 John iii. 2. Not that we ſhall be abſolutely, and in every Reſpect *like* God. It were Blaſphemy to ſuppoſe that. As none is Good but God, ſo ſtrictly ſpeaking none is Holy, Juſt, or Perfect, but God. The Excellencies of the higheſt Angels are below, even infinitely below thoſe of the divine Mind. Nor will all the Saints have the ſame Degrees of Perfection in Heaven; *as one Star differeth from another Star in Glory*, ſo do the Saints in their Reſurrection-State, and conſequent Bleſſedneſs. Their Advancement and Happineſs hereafter will, I doubt not, be different, according to their different Improvements in Grace, Holineſs, and Uſefulneſs in this World.

Nor is it likely their Perfection will be *ſimul & ſemel*, † all at once. God is infinite, abſolutely perfect, and uncapable of Addition and Improvement: But 'tis not reaſonable to think the Saints, even in *Paradiſe*, are ſo; that they *immediately* arrive at the higheſt Pitch of their Attainments: 'Tis not likely they ſhall know as much of God and his Works, the very Moment or Hour they are admitted to *Paradiſe*, as they will do, after they have been contemplating the glorious Objects that ſurround them Myriads of Years: They'll learn the Song of *Zion* better, underſtand the Hallelujahs of Heaven better, when they have been for Ages employed therein, than at firſt. By beholding the bleſſed God they'll be more enlighten'd, more impreſs'd; have their Hearts more enlarg'd, and be proportionably fill'd. This I apprehend to be the Caſe, not aſſerting that it is, only ſuppoſing that it may.

† Since the writing of this, the pious and ingenious Mr. *Wats* has publiſh'd ſome curious and entertaining Thoughts upon the Saints Perfection in the other World, and has offer'd very probable Reaſons to prove that it admits of Advances and Increaſe; to whom I refer the Reader for farther Satisfaction on this Head, and on other Subjects touch'd in the preſent Diſcourſe.

In the mean time every Saint in Heaven is perfect and happy; perfectly happy, *Heb.* xii. 23. Their Deſires are bounded and ſatisfied, ſo as neither to grudge another's Portion, nor aſpire with Uneaſineſs after an higher Station. *In thy Preſence is Fulneſs of Joy,* Pſal. xvi. *ult.* This the loweſt Saint in Heaven finds: He's ſatisfied, each one is ſatisfied with the divine Likeneſs.

In ſhort, the Souls of good Men in the heavenly *Paradiſe,* ſhall be changed and transformed into as great a Reſemblance of God, as their full Happineſs requires. *The new Man is now renewed after the Image of him that created him,* Col. iii. 10. That's the Pattern and Exemplar. But alas! how far do we fall ſhort thereof? The divine Work, at preſent, is at beſt but a rough Draught, that has little of the Beauties of the Original: But in *Paradiſe* it ſhall be finiſhed; there ſhall be an entire Rectitude of Mind; every Faculty be ſuitably adorn'd, and the whole Soul ſhine with all the Luſtre and Brightneſs of the divine Image.

Particularly (juſt to glance at a Subject copious enough to fill a Volume) our Knowledge will then be perfect; (in the Senſe mentioned) we ſhall be ignorant of nothing that 'tis fit for us to know, and that concerns our Happineſs. All thoſe ſublime and more difficult Points of Revelation and Faith, which now puzzle and divide learned Men, ſhall be clear'd up, ſo far as we have any Intereſt in them: And no queſtion, we ſhall wonder at our former Ignorance, and much more at our former Raſhneſs and Preſumption. Our Knowledge ſhall be extenſive; we ſhall know God in his Nature, Works, Providences: The meaneſt Saint will be able then to philoſophize, far above the greateſt *Adept* in the preſent State: And then this Knowledge will be clear, diſtinct, eaſy, by *Intuition,* as it

it were. As we now know but little, ſo 'tis at great Expence that we know what we do. We firſt receive certain Principles, which are as the Foundations of Knowledge: and from thence, by very tedious, laborious, and often very uncertain Concluſions, we proceed to other Truths that we apprehend connected with them. And thus, by Degrees, we acquire a ſmall Stock, which we ſet up with, and have the Vanity to call Wiſdom Learning, *Profound Learning!* tho' in Reality 'tis little better than a Collection of Blunders, compared with the Light of the other World: Heaven is the Region of Light, pure unclouded Light; there's neither Labour nor Miſtake attending their Enquiries. "The Saints will then, as one ſpeaks, "have their Veſtment of Light, upon as cheap "Terms as the Lilies their Ornaments: *And yet* "Solomon, *in all his Glory* of Wiſdom and Un- "derſtanding, *was not arrayed like one of them.*"

And as Knowledge, ſo Love, Humility, Meekneſs, Subjection, Reſignation, Delight, Joy, and every other Grace will then be perfected. There's every Grace without any Mixture, any thing of the contrary Alley: *The King's Daughter is all glorious within.* There the Spouſe ſhall anſwer that Character without a Figure, or any Abatement in the Interpretation, *Thou art all fair, my Love, there is no Spot in thee,* Cant. iv. 7. Here, in our beſt Strains, we are but *preſſing towards the Mark.* Our moſt lively, ſucceſsful Endeavours in Religion, are but a vigorous Effort to throw off a dead Weight, and Burden of Corruption; which alas! ſtill cleaves to us. In *Paradiſe* this Struggle will be over; we ſhall then have attain'd full Perfection, entire Happineſs. This, O my Soul! is Heaven, this is part of the Pleaſure of *Paradiſe.*

Thou wilt then view thy ſelf in all the Accompliſhments of the divine Image.

4thly, There's *the Pleaſure of the Frame*, conſequent upon the former. The Heart will be always in Tune, every Faculty in its due State and Poſture: There will be no Jar and Confuſion within; no Rebellion in the inferior, againſt the ſuperior Powers; but the whole Soul ſo diſpoſed, as it ought to be, towards God, itſelf, and towards others: Never diſturbed with any Corruptions, hurried with any Paſſions; no more Clouds in the Mind, or Tumult in the Affections; but an entire perfect Rectitude, as is implied in what was ſaid before. And who can eſtimate the Pleaſure, the Joy, and even Triumph, that flows from hence?

Take an improved Chriſtian in his beſt Frame, when moſt ſerious, ſolemn and devout; the Heart enlarged, following hard after God, the Affections ſet on Things above, raiſed to the higheſt Pitch he ever attains; Corruptions, for the preſent, ſtill, and laid dead at his Foot; and ſuppoſe this Frame to continue for a Day, or a Week: Such a one for the time, would have a little Heaven of it; would really know more of Heaven, have a more ſenſible Idea of *Paradiſe*, than the moſt artful Deſcription in the World could convey to him: And ſuch a Frame, in its Perfection, and made unchangeable, is the very Heaven I am enquiring after. This, O my Soul! is *Paradiſe*. Here thou wilt find a full Pleaſure, an entire Acquieſcence and Reſt; beyond which thou wilt need, or deſire no more. Now thou wilt be filled with that *Righteouſneſs* thou art *thirſting after*, Matt. v. 6. Now thou wilt compleatly enjoy thy ſelf, and thy God, and therein be happy for ever.

5thly,

5thly, There's *the Pleaſure of the Work and Employment*; though here I find a Veil interpoſing: No doubt, but the Soul, as it is eſſentially Life and Action, will be conſtantly employed in the other State, and that with ſuitable Comfort, and Pleaſure to itſelf; but wherein, or how it ſhall be employed, at preſent we rather gueſs than know: 'Tis probable, the Exerciſe of divine Grace will be part of our Work in Heaven. It is ſaid of thoſe that *die in the Lord, that their Works follow them, or follow with them*, Rev. xiv. 13. *i. e.* as ſome gloſs; *their Works go along with them*; are continued in the other World: *They reſt* indeed *from their Labours*, from a great deal of their Work on Earth, and from the Toil and Trouble of all of it; but part of their Work here will remain ſo hereafter. As for Inſtance, here we contemplate God: This we ſhall do in Heaven, though with more Succeſs and Satisfaction. Now *we know in part, then that which is in part ſhall be done away: Now we ſee through a Glaſs darkly, then Face to Face, we ſhall ſee him as he is, and know as we are known*, 1 Cor. xiii. 9, 10, 11. There will be no Study indeed in Heaven, ſuch as our preſent diſtant imperfect State needs; but I preſume, there will be ſtill Enquiry: For if the Angels pry and look into divine Things, for the further Improvement and Satisfaction of their Minds, as the *Apoſtle* intimates they do, 1 *Pet.* i. 12. why ſhould we think the Saints will be above Searches of this Nature?

Farther, here 'tis part of our Work to reſign ourſelves to God, ſubject ourſelves to him; endeavouring to bring our Hearts under the Awe and Influence of his Authority. This is often done by us, if Chriſtians, with great Seriouſneſs and Solemnity; and yet, after all, 'tis ſo imperfectly done, that we ſtill find Cauſe to do it over again, and

and again: Now the ſame will be our Work in Heaven, tho' performed with more Succeſs. Self-Subjection is now our *Deſire*, then our *Attainment*, our habitual State and Frame, which yet hinders not a conſtant, *actual* Reſignation: And how great the Pleaſure of this devout Perſons may conjecture, from what they find and feel in the preſent, imperfect Degrees of it. " A Soul, ſays * one, " formed into an obediential ſubject Frame (*viz.* " *to God*) What ſweet Peace does it enjoy? Every thing reſts moſt compoſedly in its proper " Place; a Bone out of Joint knows no Eaſe, nor " lets the Body enjoy any: The Creature is not " in its Place, but when it is thus ſubject, is in " Sudordination to God: By flying out of this " Subordination, the World of Mankind is become " one great disjointed Body; full of weary Toſ-" ſings, unacquainted with Eaſe or Reſt: That " Soul, that is but in a Degree reduced to that " bleſſed State and Temper, is, as it were, in a new " World: So great and happy a Change does it " now feel in itſelf. But when this Transforma-" tion ſhall be compleated in it, and the Will of " God ſhall be no ſooner known than reſted in, " with a complacential Approbation; and every " Motion of the firſt and great Mover ſhall be an " *efficacious Law*, to guide and determine all our " Motions; and the leſſer Wheels ſhall preſently " run, at the firſt Impulſe of the great and Ma-" ſter Wheel, without the leaſt Rub or Heſita-" tion: When the Law of Sin ſhall no longer " check the Law of God; when all the Conten-" tions of a rebellious Fleſh, all the Counterſtriv-" ings of a perverſe, ungovernable Heart ſhall ceaſe " for ever; Oh! Unconceivable Bleſſedneſs of " this Conſent, the Pleaſure of this joyful Harmo-" ny, this peaceful Accord!" This a Chriſtian is aſpiring

* How *Bleſſed. Righ.* p. 158.

aſpiring after here on Earth: This he is eſſaying and attempting, though with great Diſappointment. Well, in Heaven he will be employed the ſame Way; only without the Reluctancy and Oppoſition of a carnal Mind: He is now *reſigning*, then he ſhall be *reſigned*. He now ſays, Lord, *I wou'd be thine*; then he can ſay *I am thine, fully thine*; all former Enmity being removed, and the Heart wrought up to an unreſerved abſolute Subjection and Obedience to the great God. This, O my Soul! is the Work of Heaven; here the Joy of Heaven.

Farther, It is our Work here to love God, to delight in him: And ſurely this will not ceaſe in Heaven; the *Apoſtle* aſſures us of the contrary, 1 *Cor* xiii. 8. Love is an heavenly Grace, and the Exerciſe of it will be the Buſineſs of Heaven; *will be Heaven.* " * Love, ſays the forementioned great * Ibid. 161.
" Author, is an eminent part of the Likeneſs of
" God in his Saints: It is an Excellency, conſi-
" der'd either in its Original, or Copy, made up
" of *Pleaſantneſs*. Love to a Friend is not with-
" out high Delight; eſpecially when he is preſent
" and enjoyed. Love to a Saint riſeth higher in
" Nobleneſs and Pleaſure. It is now in its higheſt
" Improvement, in both theſe Aſpects of it. Now
" does the Soul take up its ſtated dwelling in Love,
" even in God who is Love; and as he is Love,
" it is now enclos'd and encompaſs'd with Love,
" converſant in the proper Region and Element of
" Love; the Love of God is now perfected in
" him; that Love, which caſts out tormenting Fear:
" So that here is Pleaſure without Mixture. How
" naturally will the bleſſed Soul now diſſolve and
" melt in Pleaſure; it is now framed on purpoſe
" for Love-Embraces and Enjoyments: It ſhall
" now love like God, as one compoſed of Love;

" it

" it ſhall no longer be its Complaint and Burden, " that it cannot retaliate in this Kind; that being " beloved, it cannot love." Love, as it includes high Eſtimation and Reverence of God, ſteady Adherence to him, a delightful View of his Perfections and Excellencies; an approving, with Applauſe, his Providences, Government, and all his Ways; this, I doubt not, will be the Soul's Exerciſe in Heaven; it will almoſt loſe itſelf, as I may ſay, in the Contemplation of theſe Things; for ever admiring the Wiſdom and Excellency of the Author. Here, O my Soul! will be thy Heaven: hence Joy unſpeakable, and glorified.

Again, Here we are often employed in Worſhip; which indeed is the moſt noble, honourable Service we are capable of; the Glory and Diſtinction of our Nature. *All thy Works ſhall praiſe thee, thy Saints ſhall bleſs thee*, Pſal. cxlv. 10. And, we need not queſtion, this ſhall continue our Work in *Heaven*: Hence Heaven is called a *Church*, Heb. xii. 23. And *John*, in his Viſion, repreſents the Members thereof, as *not reſting Night nor Day, Saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty*; as *caſting the Crowns before the Throne, and worſhipping him that lives for ever and ever*, Rev. iv. 8. 10. They agnize and acknowledge his Perfections, giving him the Glory of his Attributes, Providences, Grace, *&c.* And how delightful may we ſuppoſe their Worſhip? how entertaining to the Mind? There's no Pleaſure on Earth like that of Worſhip; even now, when the Heart is in Frame, in our low manner: But then it will be always ſo, and much more ſo; the Object ever preſent; the Mind fill'd with the Glories of it; and all the Faculties exerted in the inwards Acts of Love, Praiſe, Reſignation, *&c.* and theſe, it may be, outwardly expreſſed, in a Way ſuitable to that State. Let me only add, that

as

as the Imperfection of all our Services and Worſhip ſhall be done away; ſo ſuch Service as, in this Life, imply Imperfection, ſhall ceaſe then: There will be no Confeſſion or Contrition; no Humiliation in *Paradiſe*. All Work of this Nature is calculated for the preſent Meridian; a State of Sin and Sorrow. Here *we ſow in Tears*, but there *we ſhall reap in Joy*. Our preſent Complaints ſhall be turned into Songs of Praiſe, and our Notes of Grief into triumphant Hallelujahs!

Again, I doubt not we ſhall be employed in mutual Converſe with our Fellow Saints; and it's probable with the *Angels* too; comparing Notes with one and another; converſing ſometimes with the *Patriarchs* and *Prophets*; ſometimes with the *Apoſtles* and *Martyrs*; ſometimes with our old dear Friends and Acquaintances; Miniſters, Chriſtian Brethren, *&c.* diſcourſing with them of former Paſſages here on Earth, as well as of the preſent Enjoyments of Heaven. This, O my Soul! and ſuch like, will be thy Buſineſs in the other World, in the Paradiſe of God: Thou wilt, 'tis probable, be everlaſtingly employed in ſome ſuch Way as this. And was there nothing more, methinks, this alone wou'd be enough of itſelf to create a *Paradiſe!*

What Pleaſure do we ſometimes find now in the Work of God? in any little Service that we have Reaſon to think is accepted of God; and in which we have the Teſtimony of Conſcience, that it is well deſign'd? How grateful is Praiſe and Prayer even with Faſting and Tears, if the Heart be engaged? If God touch our Tongue with a Coal from his Altar, how ready to cry out, on ſuch Encouragement, Here am I, ſend me; even tho' the Errand itſelf be difficult and ungrateful? But, O the Pleaſure of Heaven! How great the Joy

end Delight of our Work there! when we ſhall never miſcarry in it; never have an uncomfortable Reflection upon it; never ſuffer the Reproach of Conſcience, as having been careleſs or unfaithful. In a Word, when every Service will be performed with perfect Integrity and all ſuitable Affection; and God himſelf preſent therein, crowning all with his Favour and Smiles. Oh! may I be better acquainted with this Work here on Earth; and may it be my everlaſting Work in Heaven!

A Fourth Meditation on HEAVEN.

6thly, THere's *the Pleaſure of the beatifick Viſion*, as it is generally called; that is, of ſeeing and enjoying God. What this includes at preſent, we know not: But the Scripture not only ſignifies that *we ſhall ſee him*, but that there is a Felicity and Happineſs wrapt up in it, 1 *Joh.* iii. 2. We ſhall have ſuch a Sight of the divine Being, as will transform the Soul into its Likeneſs; *we ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is.* The clear, diſtinct, more immediate View we ſhall have of the bleſſed God in *Paradiſe*, will powerfully impreſs and transform the Mind; leave upon it the very Image of the Object: and who can tell how much it will raiſe, entertain and delight? When *Moſes* had that Interview with God in the Mount; was admitted into his nearer Preſence; 'tis ſaid, *his Face ſhone*; there was an heavenly Luſtre, ſome Rays of Divinity derived to him; inſomuch, that he was forced to *put on a Veil*, when he converſed with the People, *Exod.* xxxiv. 30, 35. Nor is it an improbable Conjecture, that this extraordinary Manifeſtation of God to him was a Means of ſuſtaining and ſupporting his Spirits, through his Faſt

of forty Days. He had then Meat to eat that the World knew not of; *the Joy of the Lord* was his *Strength*; which, for that time, ſet him ſo far above the Neceſſities of the Body, that he ſubſiſted without Food or Sleep. And, O my Soul! will not the Preſence of God in Heaven, fully, immediately, and for ever enjoy'd, have a more glorious Influence? How delightful is that ſhort Taſte of the divine Preſence, holy Men are now and then favoured with here on Earth? How do they triumph in it? If he *lift up the Light of his Countenance upon them*, they are ready to pity, I had almoſt ſaid, inſult the poor Worlding, *Pſal* iv. 6, 7. But Oh! the Pleaſures of *Paradiſe*, when we ſhall dwell in his Preſence for ever; never more complain of an interpoſing Cloud, or ſuffer an Eclipſe; but have his Light and Favour filling the Mind, and invigorating every Faculty. This, O my Soul! is Heaven; *in his Preſence is Fulneſs of Joy*, Pſal. xvi. *ult.*

7thly, There's *the Pleaſure of being with Chriſt*; of converſing and enjoying our glorify'd Redeemer: This we may with Confidence expect: *Where I am, there ſhall my Servant be*, John xii. 26. And again, John xvii. 24. *Father, I will, that they whom thou haſt given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my Glory which thou haſt given me.* We ſhall ſee him in his exalted State, in his glorious Reſurrection-Body: See him upon his Throne, incircl'd with Angels, and worſhipping Saints; receiving the Honour, and Marks of Diſtinction due to him. And who can eſtimate the Pleaſure of this? "Was "I only admitted, ſays one, to look in within the "Veil, and behold my Lord ſurrounded with all "his Glory, it wou'd be a marvellous Conſola-"tion to me, though I were ſure never to partake "of it." But granting this to be too high a Flight,

Flight, we may be certain the View of his Glory, with Intereſt and Participation, will greatly entertain. When *Peter* had a ſhort Specimen of it in the Mount, he cries out, *It is good to be here*, Matt. xvii. 4. Shall we not much more ſay thus of Heaven, when we behold his fuller Glory, and are admitted to converſe with him in that Glory; yea, are glorified with him? It may be we ſhall hear Chriſt himſelf commenting upon his own Work; diſplaying the Wonders of his Grace and Love. However, we ſhall ſee the Work finiſhed; ſee him poſſeſſed of the Joy that was once ſet before him, ſhare with him in that Joy. *Enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord*, Matt. xxv. 21. *Shall ſit down with him in his Throne of Glory*, Rev. iii. 21.

8thly, There's *the Pleaſure of reviewing and looking back upon the former State.* This, no queſtion, will be an Ingredient in Heaven, and contribute to the happineſs of it: *Son, remember*, ſays *Abraham* to the rich Man in Hell, *Luke* xvi. 25. In the other World they will remember paſt Tranſactions. The Saints will *remember*, with unſpeakable Affection and devout Reſentment, the former Things, in their Ignorance, Enmity, and Diſtance from God; before he called them by his Grace: *Remember* the Sin, Folly, and Danger of their unconverted State; the Methods of divine Providence and Grace in recovering them to himſelf: *Remember* the Admonitions, Warnings, Convictions they had, and the bleſſed Iſſue of all at laſt. With what Tranſport will they be ready to ſay as the *Apoſtle*, 1 Tim. i. 13. *I was before a Blaſphemer, Injurious, a Drunkard, a Swearer, Carnal, Earthly, ſenſual, a Companion of Fools*, &c. *but I obtained Mercy:* In me God ſhewed forth all Long-ſuffering and Patience. And Oh! how will this ſtrike their Affections, excite their Love, Praiſe, and Gratitude:

make

make them caſt down their Crowns before the Throne, and fill them with Admiration and Joy for ever! They'll *remember* the Difficulties and Trials they paſſed through; the Temptations and Tears that befel them: *Remember* their Praying, Weeping, Faſting, their Conflicts and Fears; their Supports, Reliefs, Deliverances, and for ever adore the Wiſdom, Mercy, and Grace of Providence in its Conduct towards them. In ſhort, all the Scenes of Life will often open before their Eyes; they'll *remember* what they were, where they were; view themſelves upon the Precipices from whence they were ſo often ſaved, and ſeaſonably reſcued; even *ſnatch'd as Firebrands out of the Fire.* Oh! my Soul! how grateful this Remembrance, how entertaining? It will not only ſupply thy Songs, but increaſe thy Joys, and give a Reliſh to the other Delights of *Paradiſe.*

Nor is it unfit to ſuppoſe there will be a Compariſon between the former Condition and State on Earth, and the preſent happy State and Frame in Heaven. Thou wilt, O my Soul! be apt thus to reaſon with thyſelf. " * I that did ſometimes bear " the accurſed Image of the Prince of Darkneſs, " do now partake of the holy, pure Nature of the " Father of Lights. I was a meer *Chaos*, an hi- " deous heap of Deformity, Confuſion, and Dark- " neſs: But he that made Light to ſhine out of " Darkneſs, ſhin'd into me, to give the Know- " ledge of his own Glory, in the Face of Jeſus " Chriſt; and ſince has made my way as the ſhi- " ning Light, ſhining brighter and brighter unto " this perfect Day. I was a Habitation for Dragons, " a Cage of noiſom Luſts: After I began to live " the ſpiritual new Life, how ſlow and faint was my " Progreſs towards Perfections? How indiſpoſed " did I find myſelf to the proper Actions of that

* *How,* 178.

" Life? To go about any ſpiritual Work was, too
" often, as to climb an Hill, or ſtrive againſt the
" Stream; or as an Attempt to fly without Wings:
" How liſtleſs to theſe Things! How lifeleſs in
" them! Impreſſions made, how quickly loſt!
" Gracious Frames, how ſoon wrought off and
" gone! Characters of Glory raſed out, and over-
" ſpread with Earth and Dirt! But, O my Soul!
" divine Comelineſs hath, *now at length*, made thee
" perfect: The Glory of God doth now cloath
" me; they are his Ornaments I wear: He hath
" now perfectly maſter'd the Enmity of my Heart;
" I am all Spirit and Life; I feel myſelf diſbur-
" dened and unclog'd of all the heavy, oppreſſive
" Weights that hung upon me; no Body of Death
" doth now incumber me; no Deadneſs of Heart;
" no Coldneſs of Love; no Averſion from God;
" no ſenſual Inclinations or Affections; no ſinful
" Diviſion of Heart between God and the Crea-
" tures; he hath now the whole of me; I enjoy
" and delight in none but him. O bleſſed Change!
" O happy Day! This is that I longed and la-
" bour'd for; which I prayed and waited for;
" which I ſo earneſtly breathed after, and reſtleſly
* Ibid. *p.* 184. " purſued. What would * I once have given for
" a ſteady, abiding Frame of Holineſs? for an
" Heart conſtantly bent and biaſs'd towards God?
" conſtantly ſerious, conſtantly tender, lively,
" watchful, heavenly, ſpiritual, meek, humble,
" cheerful, ſelf-denying? How have I cried, ſtri-
" ven for this, to get ſuch an Heart, ſuch a Tem-
" per of Spirit. And now, O my Soul! thy
" Deſires are crown'd and accompliſh'd; thou *now*
" *fully art what thou once fain would'ſt have been.*

In this manner, we may ſuppoſe, the Soul in Heaven will review its former, and contemplate its preſent ſelf; comparing the one with the other;

preſent

preſent Light with former Darkneſs; preſent Purity, Brightneſs, Life, with former Enmity, Corruption and Droſs; ſurveying the Conduct of ſovereign Wiſdom and Grace, approving and applauding every Step of Providence, and recanting former Cenſures. Oh! Now I ſee, ſays the Soul, the kind Deſign of my God and Father, in his ſevere (as I once thought them) Diſpenſations towards me; now I ſee God is true to his Word; all Things *have* wrought together for Good; what he was doing *once*, I underſtood not; but *now* I know: *To the King eternal, immortal, be Honour and Glory, for ever and ever.* This, O my Soul! will be part of thy Heaven, one of the Streams of *Paradiſe*, where thou wilt bathe and refreſh thyſelf for ever!

9thly, There are *ſeveral additional Pleaſures*, which will accrue to the Saints after the Reſurrection, and *in the final State:* partly introductory to their Happineſs, and partly conſtitutive of it; as the Coming of their Lord in his *Schechinah* and Glory: They now *love his appearing*, 2 Tim. iv. 8. Then they ſhall enjoy it, and triumph in it; when he appears, they *ſhall appear with him in Glory*, Col. iii. 4. *He ſhall deſcend from Heaven with a Shout, with the Voice of the Arch-Angel, and with the Trump of God*, &c. and he *will bring them with him*, 1 Theſſ. iv. 16. He will come *in the Clouds*, and every Eye ſhall ſee him. But, Oh! the Tranſports and Extaſies of Joy this will occaſion to his redeemed, ſaved ones. *Farther*, There's the Pleaſure and Comfort of the Reſurrection-Body, with all its Ornaments and Beauty; of the future Judgment, the Proceſs of that ſolemn Day, in which the Saints ſhall be firſt acquit, and then be Aſſeſſors with their Lord, viewing and applauding the Wiſdom and Equity of his Proceedings; and ſealing, as I may ſay, his Sentence

with their *Amen.* —— There's the Pleasure of their solemn Inthronement and Coronation; after which *they enter into the Joy of their Lord,* Mat. xxv. 21.

10thly and lastly, all this Felicity *is eternal*: They have an eternal Heaven, an eternal *Paradise*; as they have an *exceeding,* so *an eternal Weight of Glory,* 2 Cor. iv. 17. The *Inheritance* there is *undefiled, and fadeth not away,* 1 Pet. i. 4. Here our Joys are but a Taste; and how transient? If we have a little of Heaven in our Frame, and it pleaseth God now and then to shine upon the Soul with Light and Comfort, how soon is it over? If we get upon the Mount, we must presently come down again; mix with the World, feel its Vanity and Sorrow: But in *Paradise* there will be no Vicissitudes, no Change of State or Frame; no Loss or Diminution of Happiness; the Gulf is fixed, and the State eternal: *At thy right Hand are Pleasures for evermore,* Psal. xvi. *ult.*

And this, O my Soul! is Heaven; this is *Paradise,* i. e. this is part of it; part of the Joy and Blessedness thou art waiting and hoping for; It is a part, I say, tho' but a small, a very small part: There are *unspeakable Words,* inconceivable, unutterable Glories belonging to that World; which even an Angel *may not, cannot* unfold to us: If thou art so happy as to arrive there at last, and be one of the Possessors, thou wilt find thyself agreeably surpriz'd, and have reason to say with the *Queen of Sheba, It was a true Report that I heard in mine own Land*; though *I believed not the Words,* &c. heard on Earth; true as to the Substance of this Blessedness, but *behold, the half was not told me,* 1 Kings x. 6, 7. Lord, help me to believe the Words, *and may I come, and my Eyes see it!*

A Fifth

A Fifth Meditation on HEAVEN.

HOW glorious a State this! Who would not ſay, *Let thy Servant depart in Peace, and ſee thy Salvation:* But let me a little examine the Evidences of it. Theſe are not vain Words, they are my Life; here's my Hope and Happineſs, my all: And it infinitely concerns me to be on ſure Grounds. I ſhall therefore ſtop a while, and review the Arguments that may aſſiſt and eſtabliſh my Faith herein. Now that there is a State of After-Bleſſedneſs; ſuch a State as has been deſcrib'd here, called *Paradiſe*, may appear from three Sorts of Arguments; rational, divine, and ſenſible. I ſhall begin with the firſt, the rational, or moral Arguments. And,

1ſt, It may be argued from the Nature and Excellency of the human Soul, which is a ſpiritual, immaterial Subſtance; we feel in our ſelves ſomething that underſtands, reaſons, and wills; which can act ſpontaneouſly; can chuſe and refuſe, and is the ſubject of various Paſſions; as Love, Hope, * Fear, Deſire, Grief, Joy, *&c.* All which are ſo different from all the Properties of Matter, which we are acquainted with, that we muſt conclude they have a Subject eſſentially different from Matter. It was never yet proved, nor I preſume can be proved, that Matter is † capable of Thought: If any pretend it may be refin'd to that Degree, as to be capable of thinking; it is enough to ſay, all the Matter we know of is wholly lifeleſs and inactive, can neither move it ſelf nor think. Conſequently we may infer, that the thinking Principle within us is diſtinct from Matter: And this affords a good Argument of the Soul's Immortality; if

* Vid. *Sherlock* on the Immortality of the Soul and future State, *p.* 50, *&c.*

† Several have undertaken to demonſtrate, that Matter is not capable of Thought. An ingenious Attempt to this purpoſe may be ſeen in Mr. *Ditton* on the Reſurrection of Chriſt, in the *Appendix.*

if it be not Matter or Body, it dies not with the Body: All material Compoſitions, ſuch as human Bodies are, may be diſſolved by the Separation of their Parts; but that which has no Parts, no Extenſion, is incorruptible, it cannot be diſſolved by any natural Cauſe; it may, indeed, be annihilated by the Will and Power of God, from whence it had its firſt Being. But when God has created an immortal Nature, that nothing can deſtroy but his own immediate Power; as it is an abſolute Security againſt a natural Death and Diſſolution, ſo it is an Argument God never intends to annihilate it.

2dly, Add to this the excellent Capacities and Powers of the Soul; how admirable, how divine, and even *God-like* a Being is the human Mind? Whoever views it in its ſeveral Faculties; as Underſtanding, Will, Memory, *&c.* muſt own it deſigned for Immortality: To which

3dly, I may ſubjoin, that the Souls of good Men are in a State of Improvement, continually advancing towards Perfection; they are preſſing forward towards the Mark. If the Chriſtian compare himſelf at Fifty or Sixty with what he was at fifteen or twenty, how great, ordinarily, the Difference! And even when the Body decays, and its Pleaſures become inſipid, the Soul is often in the moſt flouriſhing State; Wiſdom, Counſel, Piety, and Devotion, are the Glory of the Age. And ſhall we imagine, that after the Soul has attain'd to the greateſt State of Improvement it can in the Body, it ſhall fall into Nothing? Does not this look rather like a State of Probation and Trial for another Life?

* *Sherlock*, Ibid.

4thly, It is an Argument to the ſame Purpoſe, that good Men find, in themſelves, ardent Deſires after Immortality; indeed, *theſe Deſires* are univerſal, planted in the Minds of all Mankind. It is

ſhocking

ſhocking to human Nature to think *of loſing all Being*; and after a few Years of ſuch a Life as this in the Body, be reduced to nothing: But in good Men theſe Deſires are more ſteady and vigorous. *We that are in this Tabernacle*, ſays the *Apoſtle*, *do groan, earneſtly deſiring to be clothed upon——that Mortality may be ſwallowed up of Life*, 2 Cor. v. 4. And ſhall we ſuppoſe that God will defeat the Expectations he is the Author of? That he has wrought into our very Nature a ſtrong and powerful Principle in vain, and to no Purpoſe; which, with reſpect to good Men eſpecially, only ſerves to delude and cheat them?

5thly, The governing Wiſdom and Juſtice * of God requires there ſhould be a State of After-Retribution: It is certain theſe Perfections are not ſufficiently diſplayed; don't appear in their proper Luſtre and Glory, in the preſent Adminiſtration of Things: And indeed, if we look no farther than this World, there lie Objections againſt them, not eaſily to be remov'd. What wou'd be thought of a Prince, who in the uſual Courſe of his Government, diſtinguiſheth his worſt Subjects (habitual Enemies to publick Peace, and Rebels to their Sovereign) with Honours, Preferments, and all poſſible Marks of Favour; whilſt the peaceable, virtuous, and good, are not only overlook'd, but left to be inſulted? Could he be thought a wiſe Governor? Would he not rather fall under Contempt and Cenſure, as proceeding contrary to all the Maxims of Equity and Prudence? And ſhall we impute this to the bleſſed God, which would be a Reproach to a Creature, that has but a Shadow of his Excellency and Perfection? And yet, if there be no other State, I ſee not how we ſhall be able to vindicate his Government; how 'tis poſſible to account for the Methods of preſent Providence to-

* I reſume ſome Things touch'd before, that the main Heads of Evidence being collected, and ſhewn in View, may appear in their greater Strength.

wards Good and Bad, without taking in future Proſpects, and allowing future Rewards and Puniſhments. How often do we ſee that the beſt Men have the hardeſt Meaſures in this Life? The great *Apoſtle*, St *Paul*, was a Priſoner bound with a Chain, whilſt *Nero*, vile to a *Proverb*, was an Emperor ſitting upon his Throne: The Senſualiſt, in the *Parable*, we find *cloathed in Purple and fine Linen*; whilſt the Saint, dear to God and the Care of Angels, *lay at his Gates full of Sores*. And thus it has always been more or leſs: *They are the Ungodly*, ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *who proſper in the World, that increaſe in Riches*, Pſalm lxxiii. 12. But as for himſelf he complains, *That all the Day long he was plagued, and chaſtened every Morning*, v. 14. And what Concluſion muſt we make from hence? That there is no God, no Providence, or that God is not Holy, Wiſe, Juſt and Good? No, the Inference is only this (and how well is it grounded?) that God will judge the Righteous and the Wicked; that verily there is a Reward for the Righteous; that there is another World, a better State to come, a *Paradiſe*; and that *the Upright ſhall have Dominion in the Morning*.

This, O my Soul! thou mayeſt be aſſured of, from the Conſideration both of thy own Nature, and the Nature of God; Thou art too excellent a Being to die away, and periſh for ever, after a few Moments of faint Life here; the God that made thee deſigned thee for farther and higher Things: This thou mayeſt infer from thy own Frame, and from the State of his preſent Government. Not that I have Demonſtration from natural Light and Evidence; what occaſion then for Faith? what Room for the Exerciſe of that Grace? But I have the higheſt Degree of Probability and moral Aſſurance; and ſuch as, conſidering the Weight

of

of the Subject, the Importance of eternal Things, challengeth my utmoſt Regard: The *Atheiſt* cannot ſo much as pretend to prove there is no After-State, no Heaven. I have Proof, not only that there *may be* ſuch a State, but that it is *moſt highly probable.* Conſequently, to neglect it, and prefer this World to it, would be the utmoſt Folly and Madneſs. But,

2dly, I have not only moral and probable Arguments for *Paradiſe*, but divine Arguments, as I take leave to call them; that is, expreſs Scripture-Revelation, which carries the Matter farther, and makes it certain. One can't reaſonably imagine, that the human Spirit is mortal: But after all, it muſt be granted, that we know ſo little of the Nature and Philoſophy of the Soul, that our beſt Security for its future Subſiſtence, is from the holy Scriptures. " * All our Enquiries, ſays the Lord " *Verulam*, about the Nature of the reaſonable " Soul, muſt be bound over, at laſt, to Religion, " there to be determined and defined; for other- " wiſe they ſtill lie open to many Errors, and Il- " luſions of Senſe. For ſeeing the Subſtance of " the Soul was not deduced and extracted in her " Creation, from the Maſs of Heaven and Earth, " but immediately inſpired from God; and ſee- " ing the Laws of Heaven and Earth are the pro- " per Subjects of Philoſophy: How can the Know- " ledge of the Subſtance of the reaſonable Soul be " derived or fetched from Philoſophy? But it muſt " be drawn from the ſame Inſpiration, from whence " the Subſtance thereof firſt flowed." It is from God and his Word that we learn moſt fully, and with greateſt Satisfaction, what the Soul is; that it is immortal, that it is intended for another State; that we learn *what* that State is, and *that* it is. And here I find the Teſtimony ſo frequent and clear,

* Advanc. of Learn. *lib.* 4. *c.* 3.

clear, that the Certainty of a future Heaven is equal to my Certainty of the Truth of Scripture-Revelation; if the Bible be true, Heaven is certain. Let me therefore briefly examine what it ſays on this Head.

The Revelation to *Adam* is too conciſe to afford much Aſſiſtance here; but he wanted not ſome Intimations of a State of After-Happineſs. The Tree of Life in *Paradiſe*, and indeed *Paradiſe* it ſelf, were Figures of Heaven, as we remark'd before: The pious *Patriarchs* lived in the lively Hope thereof, as the *Apoſtle* aſſures us, *Heb.* xi. *Abraham* was not the only Believer that expected another and better Country, that *look'd for a City that has Foundations, whoſe Builder and Maker is God*, v. 10. And with what Compoſure of Mind, and Vigour of Faith, does the expiring Patriarch cry out, *I have waited for thy Salvation, O God?* Gen. xlix. 18. It was revealed to the *Jews*, their *Canaan* was a Type of Heaven; in the Promiſe and Poſſeſſion of the one, they had the Aſſurance of the other. The Writings of the Prophets, eſpecially the *Pſalmiſt*, abound with References to it; ſpeaking of it as the preſent Support, and future Felicity of the Saints. *The Hope of unjuſt Men ſhall periſh*, ſays *Solomon*, Prov. xi. 7. *But the Righteous has Hope in his Death*, Chap. xiv. 32. *in his Death*, and beyond it: His Hope lives, when that of the unjuſt Man periſheth. And 'tis obſervable, that on this Conſideration, the *Pſalmiſt* triumphs over the Wicked in the midſt of their Proſperity, *Pſal.* lxxiii. He was for a while indeed gravell'd with the Caſe, *v.* 12, 13. In the 17th *Verſe* we have his Victory, *I went into the Sanctuary of God, then underſtood I their End.* He cannot mean barely their dying, for Death is common to good and bad: *How dieth the Wiſe Man, even as the Fool*, Eccleſ. ii. 16. He muſt intend

tend therefore the different Iſſues of Death; which *when he went into God's Sanctuary*, and had his Mind there awakened, and his Graces excited and exerciſed, he clearly underſtood: *Then* the known, and received Principles of his Religion had their due and proper Influence: Then he view'd the Worldling in ſlippery Places, on the Precipice; foreſaw his Fall and Ruin, with the Deliverance and Triumph of the Saints.

In the *New Teſtament* this Doctrine fills both Pages, it being the diſtinguiſhing Character of that Diſpenſation; *that it has brought Life and Immortality to Light*, 2 Tim. i. 10. *I give unto my Sheep*, ſays Chriſt, *eternal Life, and they ſhall never periſh*, John x. 28. *In my Father's Houſe are many Manſions, I go to prepare a Place for you*, John xiv. 2. And again, *Luke.* xii. 32. *Fear not, little Flock, it's the Father's good Pleaſure to give you the Kingdom*; there's a Crown, a Crown of Life, which God, as righteous Judge, will give. Both Teſtaments abundantly confirm this. O my Soul! here thou haſt a ſure Word of Prophecy to found and direct thy Faith: This State of After-Happineſs is what God has ſpoken of, *by the Mouth of all his Prophets, ſince the World began.* And thou haſt the farther Teſtimony of the great *Amen*, the faithful and true Witneſs: Here therefore thou mayeſt fix thy Foot, with full Aſſurance of Faith, rejoicing in Hope of the Glory of God.

A Sixth

A Sixth Meditation on the ſame Subject.

3dly, I Took Notice, that there are alſo *ſenſible* Arguments and Evidences of this Truth: We have ſuch Diſcoveries of Heaven, and of a future glorious *Paradiſe*, as our Senſes are capable, in ſome Meaſure, of taking in, and thereby of aſſiſting Faith. As,

1ſt, We have the Teſtimony of one of the Inhabitants of *Paradiſe*, who came from thence, and has given us Aſſurance concerning it, I mean the Son of God: *He was in the Beginning with God*, John i. 1. Had a *Glory with the Father, before the World was*, John xvii. 5. *He came forth from God*, John xxvi. 28. *came down from Heaven*, v. 38. *He was made Fleſh, and dwelt among us:* And whilſt he did ſo, bore frequent Teſtimony concerning the heavenly *Paradiſe*. It was indeed the great Subject of his Sermons, as might be ſhewn: That is moſt expreſs, *John* xiv. 2. *In my Father's Houſe are many Manſions*; he adds, *if it were ſo, I would have told you:* As if he had ſaid, "I never yet deceived you; but upon all Occaſions have dealt faithfully with you, let you know what you muſt expect, (*The Foxes have Holes* (ſays he) *and the Birds of the Air have Neſts, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his Head*; Matt. viii. 19, 20.) have warned you of your Dangers, Temptations, Sufferings; and I would not impoſe upon you in the greateſt Concern of all; no; you may depend upon my Word; Heaven is ſure; *in my Father's Houſe there are many Manſions.*"

I may add, he continued his Teſtimony to the laſt: With how much Aſſurance does he ſpeak of that

that World, when just leaving this? Thus, to the Thief on the Cross, *This Day shalt thou be with me in Paradise*, Luke xxiii. 43. And when expiring himself, *Father*, (says he) *into thy Hands I commend my Spirit.* Farther, he renewed his Testimony, when in *Paradise*; not only by the *Spirit* in his *Apostles*, but immediately by himself; as to *John* frequently in his Revelation; particularly in that known Passage, *Rev.* xiv. 13. *I heard a Voice from Heaven, saying, Blessed are the Dead.* And, O my Soul! how sure, and even sensible the Evidence from hence; here's one of the Possessors of *Paradise* giving Testimony to it; a Person of the most glorious Character and greatest Credibility; who spoke what he knew, and had seen, and his Testimony is true.

2dly, Several, in our World, have conversed and had Interviews with the stated Inhabitants of that World: For Instance, after the *Lord Christ's* Ascension into Heaven, *John* saw him, *Rev.* i. 13. The Apostle, *Paul*, saw him in his way to *Damascus*, Acts ix. *He saw the Just One, and heard the Words of his Mouth*, Acts xxii. 14. *Stephen* also saw him; he *look'd stedfastly up to Heaven, and saw the Glory of God, and Jesus standing at his right Hand*, Acts vii. 55, 56. He saw the *Schechinah*, or bright shining Cloud, in which the divine Majesty used to appear to the Church of Old: This he saw in *Paradise*; where also was Jesus, *the Mediator of the New Covenant*, in a conspicuous Glory: He saw him in his exalted State. I add the Apostles, *Peter*, *James*, and *John* saw *Moses* and *Elias*, to Residents of Heaven, on the Mount of Transfiguration, *Mat.* xvii. 3.

3dly, Some of our World have been visibly taken up to *Paradise*, as *Enoch* and *Elias*, which I reckon a sensible Evidence of another State, especially when many

many Ages after, one of them made his Appearance upon the Earth, as in the Transfiguration. So Chriſt aſcended before many Witneſſes, *Acts* i. 9, 10. *He was taken up to Heaven* in the Preſence of his Diſciples, they gazing after him; and, as I before obſerved, ſome on Earth ſaw him there, heard him ſpeak from thence.

4thly, We have an Inſtance of one caught up out of our World into that other World (I mean the great Apoſtle St. *Paul*, as in the Text) who afterwards lived, and converſed on Earth many Years, bearing Teſtimony to the Truth and Certainty of *Paradiſe*, diſplaying its Excellencies and Comforts, recommending it to the Choice of others; and, by inceſſant Labour and Pains, endeavouring to promote the Intereſt of it: Indeed he had not leave to draw a Map of the heavenly *Canaan*, and fully repreſent what he ſaw; but how frequently and affectionately does he ſpeak of it? How full of Heaven his Writings and Converſation? Bonds, Impriſonments, nothing moved him, *ſo he might finiſh his Courſe with Joy*, Acts xx. 24. He zealouſly ſerved his God, *In Hope of eternal Life*, Tit. i. 1, 2. Was ready to be offer'd up, willing to ſpend and be ſpent; and all from the View of *Paradiſe*, the Proſpect of *a Crown of Righteouſneſs at that Day*, 2 Tim. iv. 8. And how much Weight ought this Teſtimony to have with us? 'Tis impoſſible, conſidering his Character and Station, while a *Phariſee*, the Circumſtances of his Converſion; his Conduct afterwards in the whole Courſe of his Miniſtry; his Suffering and Patience in the Cauſe of God, his Contempt of this World, and Regard to another: It is impoſſible, I ſay, conſidering theſe Things, with Reaſon, to ſuſpect him of Fraud; we can neither queſtion that he was in *Paradiſe*, nor that what he ſays of *Paradiſe* is true.

2 5thly, We

5thly, We have frequent Meſſengers from that World to ours; to ſay nothing of the Apparitions of departed Spirits: The miniſtry of Angels is an Inſtance of this Kind, and a Proof of another State: *They are all miniſtring Spirits, ſent forth to miniſter for the Heirs of Salvation*, Heb. i. *ult.* And how often have they appear'd *viſibly*, and had ſenſible Intercourſe with Mankind? ſpeaking to them, and converſing with them. And though this is not now ſo common as heretofore, yet ſtill they continue their Office and Correſpondence with us; and conſequently, are a ſtanding Evidence of *Paradiſe*, as their viſible Appearance is a ſenſible Evidence of it.

6thly, God has been pleaſed to manifeſt ſomething of Heaven in the Souls of devout Men, affording them a Specimen of the After-Glory; a foretaſte of the Joys of *Paradiſe*. The *Apoſtles* had ſome Experience of this, when preſent with Chriſt at his Transfiguration; they not only ſaw a ſenſible *Schechinah* and Glory, but felt a Glory in their own Minds, a little Heaven within. Hence *Peter* cries out, *It is good to be here; let us build three Tabernacles*, Matt. xvii. 4. And how many are there, who in their more ſolemn, ſerious Frame, have found the like Entertainment? If they have not been wrapt up to *Paradiſe*, *Paradiſe* has been brought down to them. Lord, ſtay thy Hand, ſays one, I am an earthen Veſſel. I am as full of Heaven, ſays another, as I can hold in this lower State. "Oh! that I cou'd let you know, ſays the Sera-"phick Mr. *John Faneway* on his Death-Bed, "what I now feel; that I cou'd ſhew you what "I now ſee; I wou'd not for a World, for a "Million of Worlds be without a Chriſt, and a "Pardon. I wou'd not for a World live any lon-"ger; the very Thoughts of a Poſſibility of a

"Recovery

" Recovery make me tremble; I now ſee ſome-
" thing of the inviſible World; I now feel ſome-
" thing of it. How long, dear Lord, come Lord
" Jeſus, come quickly, why are his Chariot-
" Wheels ſo long a coming."

And what ſhall we ſay to the Paſſage Mr. *Flavel* relates? of the Truth of which he tells us he had very good Aſſurance, (and no wonder, when I doubt not, he knew the Man, as the *Apoſtle* did him, that *was caught up to the third Heaven*) the Subſtance of the Story is this; " As the Perſon he means
" was travelling alone, he reſolv'd to make the beſt
" Improvement he could of his Solitude; accord-
" ingly he ſet himſelf ſeriouſly to meditate upon
" divine Subjects, and particularly the Life to come,
" and the manner of the Soul's Exiſtence here-
" after: After a while, he perceived his Thoughts
" begin to fix, and come cloſer to theſe great and
" aſtoniſhing Things, than uſual, and his Affec-
" tions to riſe with proportionable Life and Vigour.
" And perceiving himſelf in this extraordinary
" Frame, he did, whilſt Maſter of himſelf, lift up
" his Heart to God, and beg he might meet with
" no Interruption that Day; which was granted
" him. And thus going on, his Thoughts began
" to ſwell higher and higher, like the Water in *E-*
" *zekiel*'s Viſion, till at laſt they became an over-
" flowing Flood: Such was the Intenſeneſs of his
" Mind; ſuch the raviſhing Taſtes of heavenly
" Joys, and ſuch his full Aſſurance of his Inte-
" reſt therein, that he utterly loſt all Sight and
" Senſe of this World, and the Concernments
" thereof: And for ſome Hours knew not where
" he was, nor what he was about: But having loſt
" a great Quantity of Blood at the Noſe, he found
" himſelf ſo faint, that it brought him a little more
" to himſelf: And after he had waſhed himſelf at

" a Spring, and drunk of the Water for his Re-
" freſhment: He continued to the End of his
" Journey, which was thirty Miles; and all this
" while was ſcarce ſenſible; and ſays, he had ſeve-
" ral Trances of conſiderable Continuance. The
" ſame bleſſed Frame was preſerved all that Night,
" and, in a lower Degree, great part of the next
" Day: The Night paſſed without one Wink of
" Sleep; and yet he declares, he never had a ſweeter
" Night's Reſt in all his Life. Still adds the Sto-
" ry, *The Joy of the Lord overflowed him*, and he
" ſeem'd to be an Inhabitant of another World.
" I ſhall only take Notice, that he uſed for many
" Years after to call that Day, *One of the Days of*
" *Heaven*, and profeſſed he underſtood more of the
" Life of Heaven by it, than by all the Books he
" ever read, or Diſcourſes he ever entertain'd about
" it."

Now here was Heaven upon Earth: And tho' this was extraordinary, ſome leſſer Degree of the like Intercourſe with Heaven, other good Men have experienced. It pleaſeth God now and then to unveil his Glory; to grant us in this Wilderneſs a Cluſter of Grapes from the promiſed Land, as a Pledge, Earneſt and Foretaſte of the full Inheritance.

And theſe are ſome of the Evidences for another World; of the Truth and Certainty of *Paradiſe*. God has not only revealed it in Nature, in his Word, but *even in our Senſes*; not but that there is ſtill Occaſion for the Exerciſe of Faith; the Truth of Scripture-Hiſtory is ſuppoſed, and the Veracity of thoſe who report what they have have ſeen or felt: But this being granted, and it has all the Proof Things of this Nature are capable of; the Evidence is, I ſay, *ſenſible*. Suppoſe the Queſtion be (and we know it has been diſputed) whether any of the

Stars and Planets are inhabited: Some deny, others affirm; others think it only probable: In the midſt of the Debate a Perſon appears, that came from one of theſe (ſuppoſed) Worlds, who had lived there; and affirms that it is inhabited; that he had ſeen and convers'd with the Inhabitants thereof, and ſuch and ſuch was the State of their Affairs. Suppoſe alſo ſome of our World had found a Paſſage thither, return'd from thence, and confirm'd the ſame thing; who ſees not that this wou'd put an end to the Controverſy? Were the Witneſſes credible; Perſons of Reputation and Character, their Teſtimony wou'd ſuperſede all farther Enquiries, ſilence Objectors, and remove Suſpicions. And ſuch are the Witneſſes concern'd in the preſent Caſe; here are ſeveral who have been in *Paradiſe*, convers'd there, ſome of them ſtated Reſidents of that World, who came from thence, appear'd and lived amongſt us; all Perſons of the higheſt Credibility, and all agreeing in their Reports of *Paradiſe*. And how many devout Souls are there on Earth, that live in the Views of that World; that keep up a frequent Correſpondence with it, eſſaying its Work, foretaſting its Rewards, as a ſenſible Pledge of what remains: So that all ſorts of Arguments concur to the Evidence of another World, another better State. O my Soul! how ſure the Foundation of thy Faith. Alas! that it is ſo weak! attended with ſo many Jealouſies and Fears. *Lord, I believe, help my Unbelief;* ſhine on my Mind; favour me with more of the bleſſed Prelibations of that World: Thou haſt told me of a future Heaven, and on thy Teſtimony I rely; into that I reſolve my Faith. But as thou haſt been pleaſed, in great Condeſcenſion to the Weakneſs and Infirmities of thy Servants, ſometimes to unveil thy Glory, and bring it down to their Senſes, I wou'd

thankfully receive, and improve theſe Inſtances of thy Goodneſs: May I, *by inward Senſation*, know and feel more of thy Heaven, *and with Patience wait for it.*

A Seventh Meditation on HEAVEN.

The INSTRUCTION.

IS there ſuch various and ſtrong Evidence for another State, a *Paradiſe?* Application.

1ſt, How unreaſonable the Cauſe of Infidelity, and how inexcuſable thoſe that eſpouſe it! We have the Teſtimony of God himſelf, that can't lie, that will not, need not deceive us: That there is an Heaven, our own Reaſon gives the utmoſt Encouragement to expect it; nay, our Senſes aſſiſt and confirm our Faith: And yet all this will not ſatisfy, there are ſtill found Objectors; ſome that call it in queſtion, and ſome that expreſly deny it; and this under the ſpecious Pretence of acting with more Caution and Reaſon than others. They gravely tell us, they are not for believing in the Dark; they can't reſign to Authorities, and take Things upon Truſt. But how ſhameful, not to ſay impudent, this Pretence? how injurious the Inſinuation? As if the Chriſtian had no Evidence, or Reaſon to ſupport his Faith; and on that Account only they rejected it: When really, whatever they aſſume, they themſelves are guilty of what they charge upon others; believing without Reaſon. They are, excuſe the Expreſſion, *the moſt reſolute Believers*: believe through more Embaraſſments, and greater Difficulties, than any attend the Chriſtian Faith. This might be made appear be-

yond all Contradiction, by comparing the Creed of these Infidels with that of the Christian. For Instance they believe, *That this World either was not made at all, or was made by Chance; by a fortuitous Concourse of Atoms. They believe that the Sun, the Stars, and all those stupendous Systems came by Chance. That the admirable Fabrick of the human Body was formed without Contrivance, or Design, and fell together by Chance. They believe that all the Operations of the rational Mind, Thought, Reflection, Love, Desire, Memory,* &c. *are the Effects of Matter variously transfigured, refined and moved. They believe the continual Order and Harmony of Things, obvious to every Eye, is the Work of Chance; that the Sun has rose and set; the heavenly Bodies have describ'd their Orbits, and accomplish'd their Revolutions in one uniform, regular Manner, and this for the Space of many thousand Years, and all by the Force of Chance,* i. e. *of a blind Nothing!*

And is not this a glorious Scheme, a rational Faith! Can these Men, with any Modesty, object against the Christian Faith, as void of Reason? while they themselves believe all these strange and unaccountable Things, not only without, but against Reason and Demonstration: But whatever is pretended, 'tis not Reason that governs them in this Matter; there must be another Cause assigned for their Infidelity, than what they are willing to own. And, in short, it is not want of Evidence, that Religion is true; that there is a God, a Providence, and a future State, but want of Inclination that there shou'd be so; *The Fool hath said in his Heart, no God*; or, *let there be no God*, Psal. xiv. 1. 'Tis the Language of his Desire, rather than the Conviction of his Judgment: The common Case of all this Herd of Men; they have no Hopes of Heaven: can think of another World only

only as a Place of Torment; as an Hell; and therefore would fain, if they could, run down the Notion of it; their Guilt and Fears are the chief Arguments againſt it. This is ſufficiently intimated by one of themſelves *(Lucretius)* who takes Notice, "That the [k] Fear of Hell and After-Puniſhment "muſt be utterly aboliſhed, otherwiſe it will di-"ſturb the Pleaſures and Enjoyments of Life," which is the true Secret of Infidelity, and Spring of Atheiſm; otherwiſe the Belief of Immortality is ſo agreeable to the rational Nature, and the Evidence of it ſo ſtrong, that it would be a greater Difficulty to reject than admit it. Nor is there a more effectual Method to cure this Diſtemper, than to endeavour to cure the Principle from whence it flows. A good Man can never wiſh there was no other State, and a bad Man disbelieves it only becauſe he diſlikes it. O my Soul! guard againſt the Prejudices and Influence of a vicious Nature. Let not thy Affections bribe thy Judgment: Live ſo as that a future, eternal State may be thy Hope, not thy Dread: And if thou deſireſt it, thou wilt never want ſufficient Reaſon to believe it.

2dly, I may hence collect the true Notion of Heaven and future Happineſs. It is almoſt too mean to ſay it conſiſts not in ſenſual Pleaſures, like the Impoſtor's *Paradiſe*; nor doth it conſiſt chiefly in an external Glory and Magnificence; but very much in the State, Frame, and Diſpoſition of the Soul; in the Purity of the Heart, the Rectitude of the Mind, and the conſequent Enjoyments.

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[k] Et metus ille foras præceps Acherontis agendus
Penitus; humanam Vitam qui turbit, ab imo
Omnia ſuffandens Mortis Nigrore, neque ullam
Eſſe Voluptatem liquidam puramq; relinquit.

Suppoſe a wicked Man in Heaven, *i. e.* Should he intrude into the Place of it, with his irregular Deſires, turbulent Paſſions, full of Enmity to God, utterly eſtrang'd from the Work and Pleaſures of Religion; his Mind tainted with Envy, Malice, *&c.* Such a one would find no Heaven *in Heaven:* The Kingdom of God, both of Grace and Glory, is within; the Pleaſures of *Paradiſe* are intellectual. Under this View, O my Soul! thou muſt chuſe and purſue Happineſs: And if ſuch an Happineſs be not agreeable to thee, thou muſt either renounce Heaven, or correct thy own Temper.

3dly, Have I ſo much Certainty of *Paradiſe*, how willing ſhould I be to leave this World, and remove thither! How readily ſhould I join with the great *Apoſtle* in his Choice! *Phil.* i. 23. *I deſire to depart and be with Chriſt, which is far better.* O my Soul! ſend Faith as a Spy into that good Land; endeavour to taſte ſome of the Fruits of it, and it will quicken thy affections to it, and ſtrip Death of its Terrors. Death, I know, is not in it ſelf grateful; it is contrary to the Original Law and Tendency of Nature, which was to be happy without dying: But ſeeing it is now the only Way to *Paradiſe*, the preſent State of Things in this World, the full Glory and Bleſſedneſs of the other, ſhould reconcile thee to the Paſſage. Why ſo fond of Earth when ſuch a Heaven is in View! O my Soul! take thy ſelf to task here; not only think what *Paradiſe* will be, but what Earth is: And if the Hopes of the one be not ſufficient to make Death appear deſireable, the Experience of the other ſure will do it. Conſider this Matter a little.

What a Circle of mean Services doſt thou here move in, attending the Demands of the Body, and miniſtring to its Appetites. The Philoſopher *(Seneca)*

neca) could ſay, a Man would dare to die, though he was neither valiant nor miſerable, only weary to do the ſame Things over and over again. Another declares, That if God ſhould grant him, after he had run his Race, to begin it again, he would moſt earneſtly refuſe it: For, ſays he, what Profit has this Life; and how much Toil? *Farther*, what a Clog, Incumbrance, and Snare do I find this Body? How does it depreſs, cloud, and enfeeble the Mind. On which account, was there nothing more, a Perſon that has a Senſe of the Dignity of human Nature, would be willing to part with the Body, that he might get out of this ſleepy State, into a State of Activity and Life. How much are we at preſent diſabled for the Work of Religion, and the proper Employment of Spirits? How little do we know, love, and enjoy God? How meanly do we ſerve him? If our Heart is in Frame to Day, it is, it may be, quite wrong to Morrow: We have it to dreſs and cultivate, to wind up again. And after all, the Body, like a dead Weight, hangs upon our Wheels. *Farther*, How great, how uncomfortable our Diſtance from God here? *Whilſt at home in the Body, we are abſent from the Lord*, 2 Cor. v. 6. How ſeldom can I get near? How little can I keep near? If now and then he lifts up the Light of his Countenance upon me, and thereby puts Gladneſs into my Heart, anon he hideth his Face, and I am troubled. And who would be fond of ſuch a Life as this, which at beſt is an Abſence from God? *Once more*, How imperfect, how ſinful a State this? A Conſideration, which alone is ſufficient to make the Chriſtian weary of it, and willing to be releas'd; eſpecially when in *Paradiſe* this Imperfection ſhall be done away. *Bleſſed are the Dead, for they reſt from their Labours*; from all their Exerciſes and Sorrows;

and particularly from those of a sinful, sinning Nature. O glorious Rest! the Prospect of which is enough to begin a Triumph, and make the devout Soul cry for the Wings of a Dove. "If an "Angel from Heaven, says one, should assure an "holy Man, that from such a Moment he should "sin no more; what Joy would it fill him with? "the World would not be big enough to hold "such a Soul." Well, Death is such an Angel, such a Messenger, it comes with this Assurance to the Christian; its Errand is to carry him to *Paradise*, where he shall neither sin, nor suffer any more for ever. O my Soul! believe this, and learn to correct thy Sentiments of dying; thy Style with Reference to it; to think and speak of Death more agreeably to Christian Principles. How common is it to say, even in the Case of a Christian, *He is dead, poor Man!* But why *poor Man*? when Death is his Perfection, his Life and his Glory. O my God! strengthen my Faith, help me to fix my Eyes on *Paradise;* to be more conversant in the Land of Promise and Rest; and I shall grow out of Love with this Wilderness, and not fear the Waters of *Jordan*. *A good Man should only need Leave to die!*

4thly, Infer, O my Soul! the Folly and Madness of those, who for the *Shadow and Dream* of an earthly Happiness, deprive themselves of the Joys of *Paradise:* I call it a Shadow, a Dream, for 'tis no better. All who have tried the Experiment, and sought an Happiness here below, have felt the Delusion, and found the Disappointment. The State of our present Enjoyments is not pure enough to afford Happiness; they are adulterated and mix'd. There is a Sorrow interwoven with our Comforts; a Sting in the Tail of our Delights; and then how uncertain? how frequently interrupted?

ted? how momentary and fading? Shouldſt thou, O my Soul! place thy Happineſs in bodily Pleaſures, theſe will be ſoon gone; Diſtempers or Age will take away the Reliſh of them; the evil Days will come, and the Years draw nigh, when thou ſhalt be forced to ſay, theſe are no Pleaſures; and then Death will make an eternal Separation. Are Riches, Honours, *&c.* thy Bait, thy Phantom thou embraceſt, under the Name and Notion of Happineſs? As they cannot ſatisfy, while thou haſt them, ſo thou canſt not keep them. This Scheme of Things, *the Faſhion of this World* paſſeth away in a few Years at moſt, thou muſt reſign thy Breath and Life; and then whoſe ſhall theſe Things be? And where will that Happineſs be that depends thereon? O my Soul! dread the Thoughts of ſuch Impoſture. Was there no other, no better Happineſs, it would be no Crime to chuſe what's preſent, and make the beſt thou canſt of it: But to prefer it to *Paradiſe*, chuſe it inſtead of God and Heaven, and all the Bleſſings of a future, eternal State, is ſomething that wants a Name: It is a Degree of Madneſs that no Heart can fully conceive, no Words expreſs, but will appear hereafter in a proper Light; appear to the utter Shame and Amazement of poor deluded Creatures: And, no doubt, Reflection hereupon will be one Ingredient in their Hell. "For *how ſhort* a Pleaſure, ſays he, "have I parted with a Kingdom," that ſold it in his Extremity for a Drink of Water? I had, ſays the Sinner, the Offers of Life, the Joys of Heaven propoſed to me; but I ſold my Birth-right for a Meſs of Pottage! *I might have been an Angel, but I would be a Brute; and now I am become a Devil!* How will ſuch Thoughts diſtreſs the Mind, and inrage the Flames of Hell? Lord ſave me from ſo fatal a Miſtake! help me ſo to chuſe now, as that I may approve hereafter.

An

An Eighth Meditation on HEAVEN.

The CONSOLATION.

AND is there ſo certain a Proſpect of ſuch glorious Things? Solace thy ſelf, O my Soul! therein; let the Hope of *Paradiſe* eaſe thy Complaint, and leſſen thy Burden. When Chriſt was fortifying his Diſciples againſt Sorrow and Deſertion; *Let not your Hearts*, ſaith he, *be troubled:* He immediately adds, as an Antidote againſt Trouble, *In my Father's Houſe are many Manſions*, John xiv. 1, 2. And I find him elſewhere applying and uſing his own Doctrine for the ſame Purpoſe: *For the Joy ſet before him, he endured the Croſs, deſpiſing the Shame*, Heb. xii. 2. Believe, O my Soul! theſe Manſions; ſet thy Lord's Joy before thee; let Faith and Hope take hold of that which is within the Veil, and they will be an Anchor to thee, keep thee ſtedfaſt in the midſt of the Storms of a tempeſtuous World: Whatever thy preſent Exerciſes be, from the World, from the Body, from Sin, from Satan; *Paradiſe* will end all, and make amends for all: There is no more Death, no more Night, Darkneſs, or Tears in that World. Indeed *Paradiſe* is future, but 'tis certain and near; Faith can ſet thee beyond this intervening *almoſt Nothing* of Time, realize and preſentiate it to thee: And who that believes *that* it is, and knows in any Meaſure *what* it is, would make any great Account of preſent Grievances? I reckon, ſaith the *Apoſtle, that the Sufferings of the preſent Time* (τὰ νῦν καιρῷ, of the *Now of Time*, this flowing, paſſing Inſtant) *are not worthy to be compared with the Glory that ſhall be revealed*, Rom. viii. 18. O my Soul! ſtate and ballance

ballance Accounts between this World and that; theſe Sorrows, and thoſe Joys. Think often how little the one, how great the other; how ſhort the one, how laſting the other. And let thy future Hopes quiet thee under preſent Sorrows. It was thought an Indecency, as not comporting with his Quality and Relation, for a *King's Son* to look lean from Day to Day, 2 *Sam.* xiii. 4. And ſhall the Sons of the King of Heaven, the deſtined and appointed Heirs of an eternal *Paradiſe*, ſuffer every little Grievance to ruffle and diſcompoſe them? This, O my Soul! is unworthy of thy Hopes; the Remembrance of which, did that State admit any ſuch Reſentments, would make thee bluſh in *Paradiſe*. "What thoughts, ſaith the Martyr, ſhall "we have of the Sufferings of this Life, when "we have reigned thouſands of Years with Chriſt "in Glory!" 'Tis eaſy to imagine what Thoughts we ſhall have *then*; may I have ſomewhat the like Thoughts *now*. Help me, O my God, to converſe more above, and I ſhall leſs regard what paſſes here below. *This preſent* is a light Affliction, and but for a Moment: *That an exceeding, a far more exceeding and an eternal Weight of Glory*. May I believe it; live in the Hopes of it; and not only be patient, but joyful in Tribulation!

The SOLILOQUY *and* COMPLAINT.

WHAT Cauſe, O my Soul! to lament the Neglect and Miſtake of Happineſs! the Neglect of *Paradiſe*, and the fatal Miſtake of ſeeking an Happineſs here below? How common this, even among Chriſtians; who yet profeſs to believe a *Paradiſe*; who have admitted it into their Creed, as an Article of their Faith? How few, who ſeem

to

to have any true Regard and Reference to that State? Moſt (as was ſaid of the *Jews*, with reſpect to *Canaan*, the Typical *Paradiſe*) *deſpiſe the pleaſant Land*, Pſal. cvi. 24. and are manifeſtly in their Temper and Frame carnal and ſenſual, minding earthly Things. This has been the Manner of the greateſt part of the World; it's well if I may not ſay of the Church: They are ſtill hovering over this Earth, purſuing an Happineſs in and from the Creature; and this, after all former Attempts in the ſame way have been utterly baffled: No Warnings will take Effect with us. O wretched Caſe! Strange Infatuation of unthinking Men! "The "Experience of almoſt ſix Thouſand Years, one "would think (to borrow the Words of a wor- "thy Perſon) ſufficient to teſtify the Incompe- "tency of every worldly Thing, to make Men "happy: That the pleaſing of our ſelves, and the "Gratification of our Animal Part, is not Bleſ- "ſedneſs; that Men are ſtill left unſatisfied not- "withſtanding. But the Practice and Courſe of "the World is ſuch; as if this were ſome late and "rare Experiment, which, for Curioſity, every "one muſt be trying over again: Every Age re- "news the Enquiry after an earthly Felicity; the "Deſign is entailed (as the *Spaniſh* Deſigns are ſaid "to be) and reinforced with as great Confidence "and Vigour from Age to Age, as if none had "been defeated in it before, or that it was very "likely to take at laſt. Had this been the alone "Folly of the firſt Age, it had admitted ſome Ex- "cuſe: But that the World ſhould ſtill be cheat- "ed by the ſame, ſo oft repeated Impoſtures, pre- "ſents us with a ſad Proſpect of the deplorable "State of Mankind: *This their Way is their Folly, "yet their Poſterity approve their Sayings*, Pſal. xlix. "The wearied Wits, and waſted Eſtates laid out

"upon

" upon the Philoſopher's Stone, afford but a faint, " defective Repreſentation of this Caſe. What " *Chymiſtry* can extract Heaven out of a Clod of " Clay? What Art can make Bleſſedneſs ſpring, " and grow out of this cold Earth? If all created " Nature be vexed and tortured never ſo long, " who can expect this *Elixir*? Yet after ſo many " fruſtrated Attempts, ſo much Time and Labour " loſt, Men are ſtill as eargerly and vainly buſy " as ever; are perpetually toſſed by unſatisfied De- " ſires, labouring in the Fire, wearying themſelves " for their Vanity, diſtracted by the uncertain, and " often contrary Motions of a ravenous Appetite " and a blind Mind, and wou'd be happy, and " know not how." And this they do with a Neglect, and too often a Contempt of the only poſſible Happineſs, clearly ſet before them, and freely tender'd to them: They pretend to be in Queſt of Felicity, and yet run away from it. O my Soul! drop a compaſſionate Tear over the Follies of the human Race, who are thus hurried on even to Deſtruction, by an old, and known Deluſion, daſhing upon the ſame Rock, ſo many Myriads before them have ſplit upon; who have (ſome of 'em at leaſt) confeſs'd the Cheat, and left behind them Pillars and Monuments of Warning to Poſterity.

Bewail, O my Soul! this woful Stupidity of thy Fellow-Creatures; bewail thy own Stupidity herein. How haſt thou been caught in the Snare, been hankering after the Creature, coveting the accurſed Thing: And after thou haſt ſet thy Face as if thou wou'dſt leave, and withdraw from this Earth, how prone to look back? How little haſt thou minded that Heaven thou pretendeſt to have choſen? How much eſtranged from the glorious *Paradiſe* above, in thy Thoughts, Deſires, and Affections! It wou'd ſeem, by the Accounts we have of

the firſt Chriſtians, that they had ſo lively an Expectation of *Paradiſe*, and were ſo much taken up with it, that they cou'd think or ſpeak of ſcarce any thing elſe: *The Kingdom*, the (Heavenly) Kingdom, was ſo much in their Mouth, that their Enemies, miſapprehending them, accuſed them of treaſonable Deſigns againſt the Empire: Nay, ſo much were their Affections gone from this World, that they could ſcarce wait their appointed Time in it: They reckoned, with that good Man, that every Day ſpent on Earth was a Day loſt in Heaven, and therefore (not without Fault oftentimes) courted Death. "Being inflamed, ſaith * *Juſtin Mar-* "*tyr*, with the Deſire of a pure and eternal Life, "we breath after an intimate Converſe with "God, the great Parent and Creator of the World; "and make haſte to ſeal our Confeſſion with our "Blood." But how little of this Spirit is to be found among the Chriſtians of our Day? We are for *Stocks* and Treaſures here on Earth (on any Terms) but how cooly do we purſue Treaſure in Heaven? With moſt 'tis quite out of Sight, and as much out of Mind; everlaſting Life ſtands in our Bibles and Creeds, but has little Place in our Hearts. O my Soul! bewail thy own Share in this Guilt; weep over the woful Frame of thy carnal Heart: How languid thy Affections; how ſlow thy Motion towards Heaven! inſomuch, that ſometimes it remains a Matter of juſt Suſpicion with thee, whether thou really intendeſt it or not. Lord, pity me under my frequent and great Infirmities; give my Affections a ſtronger Byaſs, a more conſtant Bent towards thyſelf; may I never forget the bleſſed Manſions above. Help me to love *Paradiſe* more; to live upon it, and in it more; that this World may be leſs my Temptation, and that my ſure Portion.

* *Apol.* ſecond.

A Ninth

A Ninth Meditation on HEAVEN.

The RESOLUTION.

O My Soul! ſecure thy Intereſt in the heavenly *Paradiſe*: make good thy Title: Having a Promiſe left of entering into Reſt, fear, leſt thou ſhould'ſt ſeem to come ſhort of it; labour to put the Matter beyond all rational Doubt. This I wou'd endeavour, and accordingly reſolve upon ſuch Meaſures in my After-Conduct, as may be neceſſary and proper hereunto. Particularly

1ſt, I reſolve (Lord help me by thy Grace) to ſtudy the Evidences of this great Point. I wou'd endeavour for the Faith, *which is the Subſtance of Things hoped for, and the Demonſtration of Things not ſeen*, Heb. xii. 1. O my Soul! be at ſome Expence and Pains here. The Subject is worthy of thy moſt diligent, and ſerious Enquiries: Endeavour to realize Heaven to thyſelf; to get all Objections and Suſpicions concerning it removed; and converſe with ſuch Arguments and Conſiderations as have the greateſt Tendency to aſſiſt and eſtabliſh thy Faith. *We know*, ſaith the *Apoſtle*, *that we have a Building of God, an Houſe not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens*, 2 Cor. v. 1. It was no Queſtion with them, whether there was another and better World, everlaſting Habitations. Lord, help me to repreſent Heaven to myſelf in *its Certainty* and full Evidence, that I may look upon it as the greateſt Reality, and accordingly wait for it.

2dly, As there are undoubted Marks of Excluſion, certain diſtinguiſhing Characters of ſome that ſhall be rejected of God and ſhut out of *Paradiſe*, it ſhall be my Care to avoid theſe, and keep at the greateſt

greateſt Diſtance from them. *Know ye not*, ſaith the *Apoſtle*, *that the Unrighteous ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God*; *be not deceived*; *neither Fornicators, nor Idolaters, nor Adulterers,——nor Thieves, nor Covetous, nor Drunkards, nor Railers*, &c. *ſhall inherit the Kingdom of God*, 1 Cor. ix. 10. He ſpeaks of it, as *a known, confeſs'd Thing* among Chriſtians (which none cou'd diſpute that had any juſt Notions of God, and acknowledged Scripture-Revelation) that Perſons of ſuch Impurity cou'd have no Title to *Paradiſe*. The lurking Hypocrite, that artfully diſguiſes himſelf, is not ſo eaſily detected; but groſs Sinners have a Brand in their Foreheads, they too viſibly wear the Devil's Livery to be overlook'd. Guard therefore, O my Soul! againſt all Approaches towards this fatal Character; *have no Fellowſhip with the unfruitful Works of Darkneſs*; *walk not in the Counſel of the Ungodly*. The profane and ſenſual bear the Marks of final Rejection and Reprobation, and ſhall as certainly periſh, as if by Name proſcrib'd for everlaſting Deſtruction.

3dly, As 'tis not enough that I eſcape the groſſer Pollutions there are in the World through Luſt, but my Nature muſt be refined and ſuited to the Happineſs above; I humbly purpoſe, and reſolve to make this my Care: *Without Holineſs, no Man ſhall ſee the Lord*, Heb. xii. 14. *I muſt be born again*, John iii. 3. *Made meet to partake of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light*, Col. i. 12. Heaven muſt be begun here; the Seeds of a bleſſed Immortality ſown in this Life; the Principles of it laid in the Temper and Diſpoſition of the Mind. Endeavour, O my Soul! to find and experience ſomething of this; beg for the regenerating Spirit, and for farther Meaſures thereof. The carnal Mind is Enmity againſt God, and therefore can't enjoy Heaven; that Heaven which God gives, and which God

God is: Such as are under the Power and Influence of it are fundamentally disqualified for *Paradise*; they want an immediate Capacity; can neither relish the Work, Company, nor Enjoyments of that State: They have not learnt the Notes and Hallelujahs of Heaven; can't sing the Song of *Zion*. Lord, restore thy Likeness, fit me for thy Love, for thine Embraces. If I live and die unsanctified, I shall be excluded *Paradise*, not only by the Law of God, but that of my own impure Nature.

4thly, As the Lord of that World has Right to prescribe Measures of Life, a Rule to walk by, to all who shall partake of the Blessedness of *Paradise*; I resolve, (Lord, help me by thy Grace) to study this Rule, and endeavour Conformity thereto. The Rule in general is the divine Law; which may be considered, either as *first* given to Mankind, or as given afterwards upon a Change in our State and Circumstances. The first Law was *that*, given to Man in Innocency, and requir'd entire Obedience without Defect or Failure: And this was the Law our first Parents were under; upon the fulfilling of which, their Title to Life, both in the earthly and heavenly *Paradise*, depended. But this (the fulfilling of the Law, I mean,) being become impossible to their guilty Apostate Descendants; none of them can expect Heaven, or have any Title to it, according to the Tenor of that Law. There is therefore another Law more accommodated to the State and Circumstances of fallen Man, *viz. The Gospel, the Law of Grace or of Faith*, as the *Apostle* calls it, *Rom.* iii. 27. "Which "is that part of the Gospel-Revelation that con- "tains and discovers our Duty, what we are to be, "and to do in order to Blessedness, being, as to "the Matter of it, the whole Moral Law before "apper-

How Blessedness of the Righteous, *p.* 26.

" appertaining to the Covenant of Works, attem-
" pered to the State of fallen Sinners, by Evange-
" lical Mitigations and Indulgences, with the ſu-
" per-added Precepts of Repentance, and Faith in
" a Mediator; with all the other Duties reſpecting
" the Mediator as ſuch; and clothed with a new
" Form, as it is now taken into the Conſtitution
" of the Covenant of Grace."

And even this Law, the Law of Grace, may be again diſtinguiſh'd, into the Law of *Sincerity*, and the Law of (Evangelical) *Perfection*. The former, the Law of *Sincerity*, muſt be underſtood to require " the mere Being of thoſe gracious Principles with " their eſſential Acts (as there is Opportunity) " expreſſed therein, in oppoſition to the Nullity, " or Inſincerity of them." The other, the Law of Perfection, requires the utmoſt Degree of Improvement in Virtue or Grace, which, in the ſeveral States and Periods of our Life, we are capable of attaining to: We are enjoin'd to grow in Grace; to perfect Holineſs in the Fear of God; and to be perfect, as our Father in Heaven is perfect. And as the Demands of theſe Laws are diverſe, ſo are their Sanctions diverſe: The Law of Sincerity requiring the Eſſence of divine Grace, of every Grace, conſtitutes therein the Terms of Salvation, and obligeth under the Penalty of eternal Death: Thus Faith, Repentance, Love, Subjection, *&c.* are requir'd, *John* viii. 24. *Luke* xiii. 3, 5. *Acts* iii. 19. *Chap.* v. 3. 1 *Cor.* xvi. 13, 22. *Luke* xiv. 26. He is the * Author of eternal Salvation to all thoſe that obey him; but he will come in flaming Fire to take Vengeance on thoſe that know not God, and obey not the Goſpel; who ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting Deſtruction, *&c.* *Heb.* v. 3. 2 *Theſſ.* i. 8, 9. Where 'tis only the Sincerity of thoſe ſeveral Requiſites, that is, under

* Ibid. 28.

ſo

ſo ſevere a Penalty, exacted and called for; inaſmuch as he that is ſincerely a Believer, a Penitent, a Lover of God, or Chriſt, an obedient Subject, is not capable of the contrary Denomination; and therefore not liable, according to the Tenor of this Law, to be puniſhed as an Infidel, an impenitent Perſon, an Enemy, a Rebel. The Law of Perfection requiring conſtant Improvements and Advances, all that Love, Service, Obedience; all that Fruitfulneſs, in every good Word and Work, watching all Opportunities and Occaſions of doing and getting Good; and this in our whole Courſe, with all the Exactneſs and Steadineſs we are capable of: This Law, I ſay, demanding this of us, doth not bind upon Penalty of eternal Damnation, farther than our Neglects and Miſcarriages may be ſo groſs and continued, as not to conſiſt with *Sincerity*. But the Penalty here is, the hiding of God's Face; with a great Variety of fatherly Chaſtiſements and Caſtigations in this World, with the Deprivation of many Degrees of Happineſs in the other World: *He that ſoweth ſparingly ſhall reap ſparingly*, 2 Cor. ix. 6.

Now this is the Rule, the ſtanding Law, according to which the Judge and Lord of all will proceed at laſt, *Rom.* ii. 6, 7, 8, 16. *Rev.* xxii. 14. But doth not this aſcribe too much to Works, making Heaven the Reward and Reſult of them? I anſwer, it makes it the Conſequence of them; aſſerts the Neceſſity of Works in order to future Happineſs; which every one muſt own, that can look into his Bible, and has not learn'd to wrangle away the plaineſt Texts. Indeed to talk of being happy without Holineſs, without partaking of a divine Nature, without the Principles of the divine Life, evidenced and expreſſed in a Courſe of Obedience, implies a Contradiction. Notwithſtanding

nothing, according to this Scheme, is aſcribed to Works derogatory to the Grace of God: *The Creature is ſtill laid low, and he that glories, muſt glory in the Lord.* There's no Merit placed in our Obedience; 'tis of Grace, and thro' the Mediation of Chriſt, that the Law of Faith is eſtabliſhed, and our very imperfect Obedience accepted: Our Faith and Obedience is owing to the Influence and Operation of the *Paraclete*, the Supply of the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt, promiſed and given under the Goſpel Diſpenſation. 'Tis God that works in us to will and to do of his own good Pleaſure. Nor is there any Proportion between our mean, defective Service here on Earth, and the Joys of *Paradiſe*. *By Grace we are ſaved:* (finally ſaved, as well as brought under the Goſpel-way of Salvation) All in Heaven will own this, *and caſt down their Crowns before the Throne*, Rev. iv. 10.

O my Soul! attend thy Rule, ſubject thy ſelf to the Authority of thy great Lord and Maſter; ſtudy and live to his Goſpel; tranſcribe it in Practice; obſerve what he has taught; particularly in his excellent Sermon in the Mount, concerning Poverty of Spirit, Meekneſs, Mercifulneſs, Heart-Purity, thirſting after Righteouſneſs, Chaſtity, forgiving and loving Enemies; concerning Prayer, Alms, Faſting, againſt an anxious Care and Solicitude about this Life, laying up Treaſure in Heaven, ſeeking firſt the Kingdom of God and his Righteouſneſs. See that thou haſt the Truth of every Grace, that thou mayeſt not be condemned by the Law of Sincerity. " * He who hath ſo ſubmitted " his Will to the Will of God, as to be thoroughly reſolved, without Reſerve, to obey him, " and not to do any thing that is contrary to his " Will, either againſt Knowledge, or through affected Ignorance or Inconſideration, hath in this " Reſolution,

* Dr. *Scot.*

" Reſolution, the real Being of all Chriſtian Gra-
" ces, and Virtues in him, (ſuppoſing the Reſo-
" lution flow from a divine Principle) and ſtands
" uncondemned by the Law of Sincerity." May it be thus with me; may I keep up this Reſolution, and accordingly practiſe. (Lord, aſſiſt me by thy Grace, or my Reſolution will fail!) Nor would I reſt in low Attainments, and be ſatisfied with little and weak Grace, but preſs forwards towards the Mark, *adding to my Faith Virtue, to my Virtue Knowledge*, &c. Adding one Degree of Grace to another, that theſe Things may be in me and abound; ſo that I be neither barren nor unfruitful in the Knowledge of the Lord Jeſus. Lord, quicken me in thy Way; may I be always attentive, watchful and vigorous in my Work, as a Chriſtian; uſing all proper Meaſures and Miniſtries of Improvement. This is what I would propoſe, aim at, and endeavour. *O ſtrengthen me by thy Spirit, with Might in the Inward Man!*

5thly, I would alſo reſolve to improve the ſeveral Talents committed to me; I find the Sentence in the future Judgment, according to our Care herein, *Matt.* xxv. *He that had received the five Talents*, and improved them, was accepted: *Enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord*, v. 21. So he that improved his *two Talents*, v. 22. whilſt the other, that hid his Talent in the Earth, is called a *ſlothful, unprofitable, and wicked Servant, and condemned to outer darkneſs*, v. 30. Conſider, O my Soul! thy Truſt, and Endeavour to be a faithful Steward of the manifold Gifts of God: Thou haſt Talents of different Kinds committed to thee, *Talents of Nature*; as Reaſon, Judgment, the Power of Choice, Conſcience, Memory, the Senſes of the Body, and all the Faculties of the Mind; *Talents of Providence*; as Riches, Learning, Reputation, Intereſt in the

Wold, Power and Authority, Health, Time, *&c.* *Talents of Grace*, as I may diſtinguiſh them; the Bible, the Miniſtry of the Word, the Inſtitutions of the Goſpel, the Influences and Operations of the holy Spirit, *&c.* Some of all theſe thou haſt received; if not five or two, at leaſt *One* Talent; reſolve to be faithful over thy few Things. Lord, help me to improve all my Powers and Capacities, my worldly Subſtance, my Parts, Time, all my Intereſts and Abilities to the Honour of my great Maſter; and as he has preſcribed, may this be my conſtant Care: Grant me the great Bleſſing of a faithful Conſcience; which on all Occaſions may admoniſh and direct, and do thou aſſiſt me by thy Grace.

6thly, That I may be fit for the other World, I would reſolve and endeavour to live more weaned from this; more diſengaged from it, and indifferent about it; to guard againſt its Inchantments and Flatteries, and to keep it under Foot: How often has it play'd the Impoſtor with me, ſtood glaring before my Eyes in falſe Colours? It has look'd gay at a Diſtance; but when I have come near, and touched it, it has, like the ſenſitive Plant, contracted and ſhrivell'd up into a little Compaſs. Love not the World, O my Soul! nor the Things that are in the World; get it crucified by the Croſs of Chriſt! Lord, anoint my Eyes with Eye-ſalve, that I may ſee more clearly *that* World, which is afar off, and ſee the Emptineſs of this; look it into Darkneſs, a Shadow, and Nothing!

7thly, I would endeavour; be reſolved herein, O my Soul! (Lord, aſſiſt me by thy Grace) to intend this, the ſecuring my Intereſt in *Paradiſe*, as *my great and main Work*, the governing Concern of Life: 'Tis the one thing needful, the τὸ ἔργον of a Chriſtian, his moſt important Affair, to which every

every thing elſe muſt be ſubordinate: *Strive*, ſaith Chriſt, *to enter in at the ſtrait Gate*, Luke xiii. 24. The Word he uſes (Ἀγωνίζεσθε) is borrowed from the *Olympick* Games, and notes an Earneſtneſs, like that with which the Combatants there contended for the Prize. And to the ſame Purpoſe; 2 *Pet.* i. 10. *Give all Diligence.* And this was exemplified in the Practice of the Primitive Chriſtians, 2 *Cor.* v. 9. *Phil.* iii. 12, 13, 14. May this be the conſtant Bent and Temper of my Mind: And whenever my Zeal begins to cool, and I grow more indifferent about the Concerns of my Soul, may I not reſt in ſo dangerous a Frame. O quicken me in thy good way; help me to fix my Eye upon the Goal (the Mark;) *may I be ſtedfaſt, unmoveable in the Work of the Lord.*

8thly, I reſolve (Lord, help me by thy Grace) frequently to enquire into my State, to examine my Heart, Frame, Conduct, and bring all under Cenſure; which ſometimes I would attempt with more Vigour and Solemnity. Be faithful, O my Soul, herein! Don't live a Stranger to thy ſelf; often put ſuch Queſtions as theſe to thy ſelf: "Upon what "Terms do I ſtand with God and Conſcience? "What Hope of Heaven? What Foundation for "my Hope? What Meetneſs for *Paradiſe?* Should "I die this Year, Month, or Week, ſhould I die "in the Lord, and enter into the Joy of my Lord?" Thus ſhall my Spirit make diligent Search; Lord, direct and proſper me in my Work.

9thly, Whatever I find Matter of Diſquietude, of Uneaſineſs and reaſonable Fear to me, on the Account of which, I am ready to queſtion my State; I reſolve not to ceaſe till I have it removed: If a head-ſtrong Luſt and Corruption, I'll endeavour its Mortification; if Want or Weakneſs of Grace, Neglects, Omiſſions, Averſion to ſpiritual

Work and Converſe, Unſuitableneſs of Heart and Frame to *Paradiſe*, *&c.* it ſhall be my Care to get this Matter ſet right; the Cauſe of Complaint taken away: Lord, eſtabliſh my Purpoſes, and ſucceed with thy Bleſſing.

10thly, I would ſometimes make a more vigorous Effort towards Heaven, raiſing the Heart and Affections as near it as I can; endeavouring to abſtract and withdraw from the Body, and mix a while with the Inhabitants of *Paradiſe*. As this is done in a lower Degree, *often*, in the Courſe of a devout Chriſtian's Life, in Meditation, Prayer, Sacraments, *&c.* ſo it ſhould now and then be attempted in farther Meaſures; the Soul ſet apart for Intercourſe with God and Heaven; as on a Day of ſecret Humiliation or Thankſgiving. Lord, may I be acquainted with ſuch Employment, ſuch bleſſed Work, know more of Communion with thy ſelf; and therein foretaſte more of the Pleaſures of *Paradiſe*. This is the way to ſecure thy Intereſt, O my Soul! in Heaven, and to have an abundant Entrance adminiſtred into it.

11thly, As the Mediation of Chriſt is the Ground of my Claim, and Foundation of my Title, and of all my Hopes of *Paradiſe*, I would conſtantly depend thereon, and conſtantly plead the Atonement he has made. May I look to him for daily Pardon and Peace, and farther Acceptance, *Eph.* i. 7.

Theſe, O my God! are the humble Purpoſes and Reſolutions of my Soul; eſtabliſh and confirm them: Keep theſe Things for ever upon the Imaginations of the Thoughts of my Heart. I commit my Way unto thee, reſigning my ſelf to the Conduct of thy Grace and Spirit: Grant me thy Preſence and Favour here, thy Heaven hereafter, and as to the reſt, the lower, leſſer Things of this little

tle World, I inſiſt on nothing: What thou wilt, as thou wilt. *Deus meus & omnia*, My God is my all.

A Meditation on the Love of CHRIST.

Revelat. i. 5. *Unto him that loved us.*

THE Myſtery of Redemption is a Myſtery of Love; ſo the Scripture repreſents it, every where celebrating the Love of the Father and the Son, in this great and glorious Work: *God ſo loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son*, John iii. 16. *In this was manifeſted the Love of God towards us, becauſe that God ſent his only begotten Son into the World, that we might live through him. Herein is Love; not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and ſent his Son to be the Propitiation for our Sins*, 1 John iv. 9, 10. *Walk in Love, as Chriſt hath loved us, and hath given himſelf for us*——Eph. v. 2. *Chriſt loved the Church, and gave himſelf*, &c. *Eph.* v. 22. *Chriſt hath loved the Church.* And ſo eminent and ſignal is his Love, that 'tis made his Character and Deſcription: *Through him that hath loved us*, Rom. viii. 37. *To him that loved us*, Rev. i. 5. *To him*; 'tis not ſaid who he is; he's not diſtinguiſhed by any proper Name; and yet what's ſaid of him is a ſufficient Deſignation of the Perſon intended, was there nothing more: *Him that loved us.* He hath loved, and ſo loved, as never any did; Love is his Name, and Love his Memorial in the Church for ever.

O my Soul! contemplate this glorious Subject, the Love of thy Redeemer. Lord, help me by thy Grace; enlighten, enliven, ſcatter the Clouds that too often, and even, now alas! overſpread my Mind. Give me a more diſtinct Apprehenſion, a clearer

clearer View of thy Love, thy wondrous Love; touch a dead and dull Heart; tune my earthly Affections; raiſe them to a more ſuitable Pitch, that I may feel the Power and Influence of the Subject I have before me. *Awake, O my Soul! awake Pſaltery and Harp,* awake every Faculty, all that's within me be ſtirred up: While I am muſing may the Fire burn.

As the whole Doctrine concerning Chriſt, his Perſon, Offices, Meditation, and ſo his *Love* in all, is owing to Revelation; we muſt from thence derive our Notions, and thereby regulate our Conceptions and Diſcourſes about them. Let me therefore view the preſent Subject in the Glaſs of the Scripture; of the Goſpel particularly, which alone can ſhew it in a true and proper Light.

And here are two Things I ſhall propoſe to my ſelf, briefly to conſider; *what this Love is,* what ſort of a Love; and *wherein it appears,* and is expreſſed.

I. *What this Love is?* And 1ſt, I find Compaſſion and Bounty included in the Scripture Notion of it: Love in us, has generally a great deal of Selfiſhneſs in it; we are ſenſible of a Penury, and Want in our own Beings, and therefore ſeek ſome Augmentation, or Addition by Union with the Object we love: Either there is ſomething agreeable, and beneficial in the Object, that recommends it to our Eſteem, and engages our Affections; or we are laid under Obligations by the Love, Friendſhip, *&c.* of thoſe we love, and therefore love, becauſe we are firſt loved. But the Love of Chriſt is not this way excited; we had neither done any thing to oblige him, nor have we any thing that could engage him, any farther than the Miſery, he ſaw us involved in, might move him: *Herein is Love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us,*

1 John

1 John iv. 10. Which is equally true of the Father and of the Son.

2dly, 'Tis a free, generous, heroick Love, like that of ſome great and publick Benefactor, who, touched with the Miſeries and Diſtreſſes of Mankind, undertakes their Relief. *When we were without Strength, Ungodly, Sinners, Enemies, Chriſt died for us*, Rom. v. 6, 8, 10. The Fall had impoveriſhed us, brought us under a Curſe, and the Sentence of Death; the Love of Chriſt ranſomed us: *If one died for all, then were all dead*, 2 Cor. v. 14.

3dly, And how great, as well as free this Love? No Inſtance of human Love can equal it: The higheſt *that* ever roſe, was for one Friend to die for another: (as in the Caſe of *Damon* and *Pythias:*) *Greater Love hath no Man, than that a Man lay down his Life for his Friends*, John xv. 13. But greater Love hath *God-Man*, who laid down his Life for Enemies.

4thly, 'Tis a Love above all Thought and Conception of ours; as the *Apoſtle* intimates, *Eph.* iii. 18, 19 That ye *may be able to comprehend with all Saints, what is the Breadth, and Length, and Depth, and Height, and to know the Love of Chriſt*; he adds, *which paſſeth Knowledge*. 'Tis above our Underſtanding; we can't find it out to Perfection; we know not the full Dignity of his Perſon, the Greatneſs of his Condeſcenſion; and therefore can't pretend to meaſure his Love in its utmoſt Latitude; on which Account, it may be, the *Apoſtle* aſcribes a fourfold Dimenſion to it.

But why doth he deſire the *Epheſians* might comprehend it, and that *with all Saints*, if it really paſſeth Knowledge, and can't be ſo comprehended? I anſwer, all the Saints ſtudy it, ſearch into it, and endeavour to comprehend more and more of it: Something they know, more they deſire to know;

they ſtoop down with the Angels, and look into theſe Things; they are *comprehending*; and though they have not already attained, they are preſſing forward towards the Mark. Now the *Apoſtle* prays for the *Epheſians*, that the ſame Mind may be in them, that they may, with all Saints, ſtudy this Love. And, O my Soul! join thou in the Subject; nothing more worthy of thy Enquiries; Lord, ſhed abroad thy Love in my Heart; let Chriſt dwell there by Faith, that I being rooted and grounded in Love, may better underſtand and take in more of the Love of my Redeemer.

A Second Meditation on the Love of CHRIST.

II. HAving on another Occaſion ſpent ſome little Time in meditating upon the Love of Chriſt; where I conſidered what is included in the Notion of his Love, I now return to the Subject; Lord, deliver my Thoughts from their uſual Barenneſs, my Mind from Diſtraction and Vanity, and tune my Heart for this bleſſed Work!

I'm to enquire into the Juſtice of this Character; *He that has loved us*, and conſider wherein he hath manifeſted his Love: And 1ſt, How readily did he undertake for poor Sinners, in that Stipulation between the Father and him, which *Divines* call the Covenant of Redemption? The Wiſdom of God, as Law-giver and Governor, inſiſted upon an Atonement for Sin: Some honourable Expedient upon which he might forgive Sin, and treat with Sinners, with a *Salvo* to all his Perfections, and to the Authority of his own Law; *might appear juſt, and yet the Juſtifier of him that believeth*

lieveth in Jeſus, Rom. iii. 26. This Expedient, in ſhort was, that the Son ſhou'd take our Nature, and therein die a Victim, which he conſented to with all Chearfulneſs: *Sacrifice and Offering thou didſt not deſire; then ſaid I, Lo I come; in the Volume of thy Book 'tis written of me*, Pſal. xl. 6, 7, 8. He ſaid it by way of Compliance with the Father's Propoſal and Demand. The Matter was brought to a ſolemn Contract between them, as ſeems implied, and therefore 'tis repreſented as written in a *Volume*, "Which, ſays a * learned Man, is no o- "ther thing than a Bill, or Roll of Contract be- "tween God the Father and Chriſt: wherein is "ſuppoſed to be written the Agreement, prepara- "tory to that great Work of Chriſt's Incarnation: "Wherein he undertaking perfectly to fulfill the "Will of God, to perform all active, and alſo all "paſſive Obedience, even unto Death, had the "Promiſe from God, that he ſhou'd become the "Author of eternal Salvation to all that obey him." The Scripture gives ſeveral Intimations elſewhere of ſuch a Covenant (though we have not its preciſe Form and Plan, nor all the Articles of it) as *Pſalm.* lxxxix. 19, 28, 29. *I have laid help upon one that is mighty; My Mercy will I keep for him for ever, and my Covenant ſhall ſtand faſt with him; his Seed will I make to endure for ever, and his Throne as the Days of Heaven.* The Father promiſed to him a numerous and glorious Progeny: *The Heathen for his Inheritance, the uttermoſt Parts of the Earth for his Poſſeſſion.* This was the Stipulation, the Statute and Decree of God concerning him, *Pſal.* ii. 7, 8. But then he muſt be their Help, *Pſal.* lxxxix. 19. Muſt himſelf become their Sacrifice, and ſave by dying: *When thou ſhalt make his Soul an Offering for Sin, he ſhall ſee his Seed, he ſhall ſee of the Travail of*

* Dr. *Hammond.*

his Soul, and be ſatisfied, Iſa. liii. 10, 11. His Soul muſt travel, and then be ſatisfied.

Now here my kind and gracious Redeemer conſents; freely and chearfully offers himſelf; *Lo I come*, ſaith he, *I delight to do thy Will, O God, thy Law is within my Heart*. He knew what the Will of God was, *viz.* that inſtead of legal Sacrifices, altogether inſufficient for ſo great a Service as our Redemption, *He* muſt be made a Sacrifice; a Body was prepared, which he muſt live in, die in: And this he ſubmits to with Delight, rejoicing in the Proſpect of relieving and ſuccouring periſhing Sinners, upon theſe ſevere Terms, *Prov.* viii. 31. And who can fathom, who can eſtimate this Love?

2dly, And how ſtrange an Inſtance of Love his *Incarnation*, in purſuance of the forementioned Engagements! *In the Fulneſs of Time God ſent forth his Son, made of a Woman*, Gal. iv. 4. *He ſent him forth*, as was purpoſed and agreed: Chriſt had ſaid, *Lo I come*; and he did not fail; wou'd not draw back: *The Word was made Fleſh, and dwelt among us*, John i. xiv. *Made Fleſh*; amazing Condeſcenſion! Suppoſe one of the Angels, who ſtands in the Preſence of God; a bright Seraph ſhou'd, for the Sake of ſome ſpecial Service to a Number of us Mortals, have left the Regions of Bliſs, and have taken up his Dwelling in a human Body; been united to ſuch a Lump of Earth, and been united to its Laws; how ſhou'd we celebrate ſuch an Act of Kindneſs and Generoſity? We ſhou'd be often ſpeaking of, and extolling our good Angel. But, O my Soul! here's greater Love, a lower Stoop; thy Redeemer, more excellent than the Angels, has done this: He has loved thee; ſo loved thee, as to become a Man like thee: The Son of God became the Son of Man, that thou mighteſt be advanced to the Dignity of a Son of God.

Nor

Nor was the Condeſcenſion notional, that needs the Help of nice and ſubtile Diſtinctions, and the Art of Words to make it ſomething; but it was a real and proper Condeſcenſion: He laid aſide a *Glory he had with the Father before the World was*, John xvii. 5. *Was in the Form of God*, but emptied himſelf, *and took upon him the Form of a Servant*, Phil. ii. 6, 7. Love brought him from Heaven to Earth; humbled him to the State of an Infant! And what manner of Love this! *Ye know the Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, ſaith the *Apoſtle*; *that tho' he was rich, yet for our Sake he became poor*, 2 Cor. viii. 9. We know ſomething of his Grace; know that 'tis Grace, great Grace; but how great, we know not. Adore, O my Soul! When thou underſtandeſt better, thou wilt love more and praiſe better. *The Word, with God, became* Immanuel, *God with us.*

3dly, Nor did he only become Man, but was born in Circumſtances of great outward Meanneſs. His Mother, though of the Royal Line of *David*, yet was of a Family, at that Time, very much reduced. Witneſs her being eſpouſed to a *Carpenter*; witneſs her being thruſt out into a Stable at the Inn of *Bethlehem*. 'Tis indeed ſaid, *There was no Room for them in the Inn*, Luke ii. 7. But no queſtion, had ſhe made any conſiderable Figure, ſome or other would have complemented them with an Apartment, or offered them to ſhare with them in their Accommodations; but nothing of this Civility is ſhewn them: She is forced to ſhift for herſelf, and lodge in an Out-houſe with the Cattle: And there ſhe brings *forth her Son, wraps him in Swadling-cloaths, and lays him in a Manger*. Witneſs her Offering at the Time of her Purification; which was *two young Pigeons*, the Sacrifice the Law allowed for thoſe that could not offer a Lamb, *Levit.* xxii. 6, 8. *Luke* ii. 24. And

And what Condeſcenſion and Grace was here! Bleſſed Lord! That thou ſhouldſt conſent to be born for me, and thus born! Thy Chamber of State a Stable: thy Cradle a Manger, or Cratch! What a Stir and Buſtle do we often ſee at the Birth of a poor Worm? What a pompous *apparatus*, and Preparation for lying in? What Attendance and Ceremony, what Addreſſes and Flatteries upon the Birth, eſpecially if it be of one of theſe little Creatures we call an Heir! And yet! behold! the Son of God, Heir of all Things, whom all the Angels of God worſhip, comes into the World in this Obſcurity! O my Soul! view thy Lord in this Abaſement, and infer thence the Height of his Love: Learn to admire his Love, and imitate his Humility. Some of the devouter *Papiſts* have a Way of devoting themſelves to the *Holy Infancy* of Chriſt, (as they call it:) There may be a great deal of Humour and Superſtition in that; but certainly we may (with much Advantage) ſtudy, and devoutly contemplate his Infancy, which ſo loudly proclaims Love, and preaches Humility. Look, O my Soul! to the Manger of Chriſt, and learn to deſpiſe the Pomps and Vanities of this World. Look to the Manger of Chriſt, and adore the Love that brought him thither, and laid him there.

4thly, And how great an Argument of Love may we find, in the Condition and Manner of his Life? He was not only known and diſtinguiſhed as the *Carpenter's Son*, but it ſeems ſerv'd a ſort of an Apprenticeſhip to the Carpenter's Trade. Hence they call him *the Carpenter*, Mark vi. 3. The Son of God, handling the Ax and the Plane! ſubject to a poor Artiſan, as his Father and Maſter, *Luke* ii. 51. working as an ordinary Mechanick for his Bread! O my God, thy Love overpowers! Language here is ſwallowed up. Adore, O my Soul! in Wonder and Silence adore.

When

When he entered upon the Stage of publick Action, he ſtill appeared under the ſame Diminution, and in Circumſtances of low Abaſement: He had neither Houſe to live in, nor Eſtate to live upon; but was beholding to the Hoſpitality of his Friends, and ſubſiſted by their Charity: *The Son of Man*, ſaith he, *hath not where to lay his Head*, Matt. viii. 20. Certain Women, we read, *miniſtred to him of their Subſtance*, Luke viii. 3. And how was he leſſened and vilified as to his moral Character? He's traduced as a Deceiver, a Mad-man, a Traytor, a Blaſphemer, a Conjurer, a Confederate with Devils: Thus he *endured the Contradiction of Sinners againſt himſelf*, Heb. xii. 3. Of Sinners, for whom he had the kindeſt Deſigns, and for whom he was doing the kindeſt Things. Strange myſterious Love, that reconciled him to ſuch Treatment! He foreſaw it, and yet ſubmitted to it; knew what he muſt expect from the Children of Men, and yet the Proſpect of the great Salvation he ſhould accompliſh for them, made him delight to be among them, *Prov.* viii. 31. Lord, may I never forget thy Love; never think much of Contempt, Reproach, Poverty, and Perſecution for thy Sake!

5thly, And what ſhall I ſay of his Love in dying; herin the Scripture lays the greateſt Streſs of all: *To him that loved us, and waſhed us in his own Blood.* So *Eph.* v. 2. *Chriſt loved us, and gave himſelf a Sacrifice.* Had he only aſſumed our Nature, to have lived in it, in all the Eaſe, Honour and Grandeur that human Affairs will permit; never to have felt a troubleſom Moment; and afterwards have been tranſlated to Heaven in a fiery Chariot, with the Acclamations of attending Angels; there had been great Condeſcenſion, even in this; but to take a Body on purpoſe to ſuffer, to be pierced, wounded, broken; to languiſh, bleed and die; to be made

a Man, that he might be *a Man of Sorrows* Iſa. liii. 3. this ſtrangely inhaunces his Love, and raiſes it above all Comprehenſion. Take a View, O my Soul! of his laſt Scene, ſo full of Tragedy and Amazement; follow him to *Golgotha*? behold him proſtrate in the Garden, praying *more earneſtly* in his Agony; ſweating Drops of Blood; hear him crying out, *my Soul is exceeding ſorrowful, ſore amazed: If it be poſſible, let this Cup paſs from me; my God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me!* And read his Love in Tears, and Groans, and Blood. When the *Jews* ſaw him weeping over the Grave, as it were of *Lazarus*, *Behold*, ſay they, *how he loved him*, John xi. 36. Much more reaſon have I to remark this, when I ſee him, not only weeping over, but dying for loſt Sinners,

6thly, Nor did his Love terminate and end with his Death: His Government, as Head and Lord of the Church, is a Government of Grace and Love: There's a Vein of Love running through every Diſpenſation, and filling every Scene of his Providence. What glorious Diſplays of Love towards Sinners, in their firſt Converſion, oftentimes! and in his AfterConduct of them? The *Apoſtle* reflecting on his own Caſe, that he obtained Mercy, cries out, *The Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt was exceeding abundant; and in me he ſhewed all Long-ſuffering, as a Pattern to them that ſhould hereafter believe*, 1 Tim. i. 13, 16. This was a ſort of a Specimen of his Dealings with other injurious, obſtinate Sinners. O my Soul! never forget the like Inſtances of thy Redeemer's Love towards thyſelf. How long did he wait to be gracions! And in what Methods of rich and ſovereign Grace did he at laſt ſubdue, and reclaim thee? Oh, adore the Love that has ſaved thee! The Review of this Grace will be part of thy Heaven hereafter; will

ſupply

ſupply thy Song to everlaſting; now begin thy eternal Work. And how wonderful the Hiſtory of his Love; ſince with the Prodigal, he brought thee back to thy Father's Houſe? *He that loveth me*, ſaith Chriſt, *ſhall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifeſt myſelf to him*, John xiv. 21. He not only *hath* loved, but *will* love, continue to love; and as an Evidence of it manifeſt himſelf to thoſe he loves; guiding, reſtoring, ſupporting, quickening, comforting them; *he brings them to his Banqueting-Houſe*, where *his Banner over them is Love*; He *ſatisfieth them with the Fatneſs of his Houſe*, and makes them drink of the *Rivers of* his *Pleaſures:* He gathers them in his Arms, and carries them in his Boſom; follows them with a conſtant and tender Care: And as he *waſhed them from their Sins, in his own Blood*, he doth, in Virtue thereof, intercede for them above, and play the *Advocate*, in their Behalf, *with the Father*, 1 John ii. 1. Heb. ii. 18.—— iv. 15. He knows and pities their Infirmities, ſympathiſes with them in their Temptation, ſufferings and Conflicts.

7thly, Heaven is the Preparation of his Love: and indeed, 'tis there only that we ſhall underſtand how great his Love is; when we ſee it in its laſt Scene, and final Iſſue. *Chriſt loved the Church, and gave himſelf for it, that he might preſent it to himſelf a glorious Church, not having Spot or Wrinkle, or any ſuch Thing*, Eph. v. 25. 27. This is what he aimed at in coming from Heaven, *viz.* that he might advance his Servants and Followers thither: He *entered Heaven* as our *Forerunner*, Heb. vi. 20. And tells us, he went to prepare a Place for us; and that he will come again and receive us to himſelf, *that where he is, there we may be alſo*, John xiv. 23. Heaven is the Price of his Blood (*the purchaſed*

Poſſeſſion) and the Fruit of his Love: They in Heaven clearly ſee the Dueneſs of this Character, *him that loved us*, and accordingly own and adore him for ever.

And thus I've traced the Subject, the Love of my deareſt Lord, through ſeveral of its more remarkable Inſtances. Look back, O my Soul! upon them; till thou feeleſt the Power, the conſtraining Power of divine Love: And Lord, look down upon me with a pitying, relieving, helping Eye; dart a Beam of thy own Light; afford a Touch of thy own divine Hand, that I may underſtand and feel thy Love.

A Third Meditation on the Love of CHRIST.

AND is this the Love of my Redeemer? has he loved us, and thus loved us? How great thy Obligations, O my Soul! to love him? Love begets Love; all ingenuous Minds find it ſo: And indeed it generally ſoftens the hardeſt Hearts, and overcomes the moſt untractable Natures, that are leaſt capable of the tender Impreſſions of Love. How was *Saul*, even in the midſt of his Rage againſt *David*, ſubdued by an Inſtance of his generous Kindneſs? *Is this the Voice of my Son* David? *And* Saul *lift up his Voice and wept, and he ſaid unto* David, *thou art more Righteous than I, for thou haſt rewarded me Good, whereas I have rewarded thee Evil: And thou haſt ſhewed me this Day, how that thou haſt delt well with me: Foraſmuch as when the Lord had delivered me into thine Hand, thou killedſt me not. For if a Man find his Enemy, will he let him go well away? Wherefore the Lord reward thee good,*

good, for that thou haſt done unto me this Day, 1 Sam. xxiv. 16, 17, 18, 19. Love is the moſt powerful Orator: it has irreſiſtible Charms; can melt down an Enemy, and carry all captive before it. And, O my Soul! canſt thou ſtand out againſt the Force of this Love? the moſt amazing, glorious, triumphant Love! Shall an obdurate, abandoned *Saul* relent, upon a ſmall Expreſſion of *David*'s Goodneſs; and doſt thou remain untouch'd with a Redeemer's Love, in all the ſurprizing Inſtances of it? Canſt thou paſs through ſuch an Hiſtory of Love, tranſcendent, unparallel'd Love, and not be moved, not tranſported? Lord, pity my Stupidity, and cure it; break this Rock; *take away the Heart of Stone, and give an Heart of Fleſh.*

Lament, O my Soul! the Want of Love, where 'tis ſo much due, and ſo well deſerved. How do we find our ſelves obliged, by a ſmall Favour from our Fellow-Creatures? And if they heap Benefits upon us, and repeat Kindneſſes, they make us their Property; we are ſo much theirs, that we are ſcarce any longer our own: But alas! the Love of my Redeemer has not had this Effect; though it be the greateſt, and moſt beneficial, free, generous, and what carries in it infinite Obligations; how little Influence has it had upon me? how little do I feel its Power? Wretch that I am! any low Inſtance of Love has more Force and Authority with me, than that Love, which is the Wonder and Song of Saints and Seraphs: Bewail this Obduracy and Inſenſibility. 'Tis ſaid of a good Man, that often appeared diſconſolate, and would ſometimes, in Company, let fall Tears; that being ask'd the Reaſon, he anſwer'd, *I can't bring this vile Heart of mine to love the Lord Jeſus.* Weep, O my Soul! over thy vile Heart; herein vile above Meaſure, that it can throw away Affections upon every

worthleſs Object, but has none for a Redeemer; will not be brought to love the Lord Jeſus.

Stir up thy ſelf, O my Soul! and turn thy Affections into their proper Channel; direct them to their proper Object; let the Love of Chriſt conſtrain thee; he has every thing that may invite and engage thy ſtrongeſt Affections. For Inſtance, how amiable and excellent his Perſon: This is repreſented in the Book of *Canticles*, in a Variety of Metaphors, ſuitable to the Nature of that Song; and made one Reaſon of that Love, which all ought to have, and all truly devout Souls actually have, in a greater or leſs Degree, to their Lord and Husband. *I am the roſe of Sharon*, ſaith he, *and the Lilie of the Valleys*, Chap. ii. 1. *As the Apple-tree among the Trees of the Wood*, adds the Spouſe, *ſo is my Beloved among the Sons*, *v.* 3 *q. d.* "* Thou art more lovely in my Eyes than the greateſt Princes in the World, who are no more to be compared with thee, than the wild Trees, that bring forth nothing but Leaves, or only harſh and inſipid Traſh, with the goodly Apple-tree, when 'tis loaden with its beautiful and pleaſant Fruit." And after a great many affectionate Touches upon his Character, the enamour'd Spouſe attemtps a more particular and diſtinct Deſcription of him, *Chap.* v. *ver.* 10,——16. firſt premiſing, that *he's chiefeſt of ten thouſands*; and then concluding, *he's altogether lovely*. "† She finding his Praiſes to exceed all her Thoughts, ſums up all in a Breath, and comprehends his whole Character in this, *That he is all over lovely*; attracting all Mens Affections: not only thoſe that ſaw him, but thoſe that heard of him too." View, O my Soul! his Excellencies; conſider the Wiſdom of his Doctrine, the Goodneſs of his Laws, the Grace of his Government; his Meditorial Qualifications and

* Bp. *Pat. in loc.*

† *Pat.*

and Accompliſhments; his Authority as Prophet, Prieſt and King; and *in all*, his Fitneſs to be the Head, Protector, and Saviour of the Body: *In him all Fulneſs dwells:* He's *made of God unto us Wiſdom, Righteouſneſs, Sanctification and Redemption; that he which glorieth, ſhould glory in the Lord*, 1 Cor. i. 30, 31. View him, O my Soul! in his Eſſential and Mediatorial Excellency, as the glorious *Immanuel*, as made Man, tabernacling in a human Body; as inveſted in the moſt beneficent Office; ſpeaking from the Boſom of the Father, and ſpeaking as never Man did. View him in the ſeveral Steps of his Humiliation and Triumph; in all the Acts of his Power, Faithfulneſs and Grace; and thou wilt be convinced, that at leaſt, thou oughteſt to love him; wilt condemn thy ſelf if thou love him not; and hereby wilt learn to love him, and more to love him. Vouchſafe, Lord, to be my Teacher, and kindle the ſacred Flame of Love in my Breaſt.

And as his Perſon is amiable, ſo his Love recommends him: How great was that; how expenſive; how beneficial! *He hath loved us, and waſhed us from our Sins in his own Blood, and made us Kings and Prieſts, to God and his Father*, Rev. i. 5, 6. Waſh'd us in Blood! in his own Blood! Stop here, pauſe a little: What Love is this? He hath loved; Heaven muſt tell thee *how*, explain the Mode. But ſhall this Love, O my Soul! have no Effect; make no Impreſſions? If ſo, thou ſeemeſt paſt Cure, haſt the Heart of a Stone, of a Devil; forfeiteſt thy very Being, thy Power of living, and deſerveſt immediate Annihilation! He hath loved me, and died for me, became my Atonement, Sacrifice and Ranſom; hath reſcued me from Hell, raiſed my Hopes as high as Heaven; hath paid my Debt, knocked off my Chains, diſtin-

guiſhed and enriched me with high and noble Privileges, at preſent; and purchaſed for me an eternal Crown! And ſhall I not love him? I had almoſt ſaid, let me not love thee, if I love thee not!

And ſhould it have no Weight with thee, that this is the Character of Chriſt's Spouſe, of all the genuine Members of his Church, the goodly Fellowſhip of Saints, as well as Army of Martyrs, *that they love him? The Virgins love thee, the Upright love thee*, Cant. i. 3, 4. And in the 7th Verſe, *O thou, whom my Soul loveth.* The Language of the Church, repreſenting the Heart and Spirit of a Chriſtian: Chriſt is his BELOVED; him whom his Soul loveth, loveth ardently, and above all Creatures, or Creature-Enjoyments. O my Soul! join with theſe pure, chaſte, divine Lovers; don't exclude thyſelf from this honourable *Chorus:* 'Tis a ſad Mark of Reprobation, and expoſes to a tremendous Judgment, to want the Affection that's inſeparable from the Spouſe of Chriſt: *If any Man love not the Lord Jeſus, let him be* Anathema Maranatha.

Conſider farther, how pleaſing this Affection to the bleſſed Jeſus; weak, low, and languid as it is. Notwithſtanding all its Defects, he accepts it, and even glories in it. *Thou haſt raviſhed my Heart, my Siſter, my Spouſe! thou haſt raviſhed my Heart with one of thy Eyes, with one Chain of thy Neck. How fair is thy Love, my Siſter, my Spouſe! how much better is thy Love than Wine, and the Smell of thy Ointments than all Spices*, Cant. iv. 9, 10, *&c.* Infinite Condeſcenſion and Grace! And ſhall thy great Lord thus eſteem, thus value thy Love? And wilt thou deny it to him! O my Soul! devote thyſelf, thy beſt Powers and Affections to the Honour of thy Redeemer; love him with all thy Heart, and Strength, and Mind.

A Fourth

A Fourth Meditation on the Love of CHRIST.

I Have ſeen how reaſonable it is I ſhou'd love *Chriſt*. Endeavour, O my Soul! to give Proof of thy Love; expreſs it in all proper Inſtances. His Love was not idle and unactive; *he loved, and waſhed us from our Sins in his Blood.* Let thy Love manifeſt itſelf to him in ſuitable Expreſſions: Shew thy Love (1ſt,) by high and honourable Thoughts of him. When the Spouſe was ask'd, *What is thy Beloved more than another Beloved?* She replies; *My Beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefeſt among ten thouſand; his Head is as the moſt fine Gold,* &c. *his Mouth is moſt ſweet; yea, he is altogether lovely:* Concluding triumphantly, and by way of Challenge: *This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend, O Daughters of Jeruſalem,* Cant. v. 10.——18. Eſtimation is the Ground of Love; and 'tis one way of diſcovering it! Oh, exalt the Lord-Redeemer in thy Thoughts; treat him with all Reverence and Veneration!

2dly, By devout Aſcriptions: *To him that loved us, and waſhed us from our Sins in his own Blood; to him be Glory and Dominion,* Rev, i. 5, 6. And again, *Chap.* v. 12. *Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain, to receive Power, Riches, and Wiſdom,* &c. Acknowledge the Dueneſs of all the Honour the Son of God has received; join with the Church in her Praiſes; let thy Love this way vent it ſelf. Proſtrate thy ſelf before the Throne of the Lamb; he's thy Lord, worſhip thou him.

3dly, Show it by fervent Deſires after his Preſence, and after Intercourſe with him: How much of this there is in the Temper of devout Souls, they

they themſelves feel better than they can tell to others. 'Tis one main Deſign of the Book of *Canticles* * to repreſent this: The Spouſe exemplifies it in an eminent Manner, when ſhe enters upon the Conference, which ſhe begins in a Flame of ſacred Affection, continu'd in a great Degree thro' that Song. *Let him kiſs me with the Kiſſes of his Mouth. Him*; She doth not ſay who; but means the Perſon in her Heart; him whom her Soul loved: And whom her Thoughts were upon, laſt upon, now upon, and frequently upon." " *Solomon* (as " the pious and excellent Dr. *Patrick* obſerves) " ſpeaks this in the Perſon of the Virgin, Daugh- " ter of *Sion (i. e.)* the Church; whom he here " introduces, in the moſt paſſionate Strain, wiſh- " ing for ſome Token of Love, which is expreſ- " ſed under the Metaphor of a Kiſs. But there is " no Mention at all made of the Name, Condi- " tion, or Beauty of the Perſon, whoſe Love is " deſired; nor any Account given of the Begin- " ning or Progreſs of this Deſire. But he makes " her burſt out on a Sudden, and abruptly into " theſe Words; *let him kiſs me*, &c. That he might " the more artificially deſcribe the Nature and

* Whatever Reference this Book may have to the Coming of the *Meſſiah* in the Fleſh; which *Solomon*, in a prophetick Rapture foreſaw, and to the Deſires of the *Jewiſh* Church after that Bleſſing, which he here deſcribes in Terms of Affection, ſuitable to ſo great an Event, and the glorious Privileges thereby brought to the Church: Yet, I doubt not, the inſpiring Spirit look'd farther, and deſigned to repreſent the ſpiritual Intercourſe there is between Chriſt and the Church, the heavenly Bridegroom and devout Souls, even to the End of the World; which is done in a divine Song, form'd after the Manner of a paſtoral Eclogue, and in a ſort of Dramatick Poem; wherein ſeveral Perſons are introduced, bearing their Part by Turns, in ſeveral Interlocutions, or divine Dialogues.

" Force,

" Force of divine Love; which, when it poſſeſſes " the Mind, ſnatches it from itſelf, that it is whol- " ly in him that it loves: It thinks of nothing " elſe, ſeeks nothing, wiſhes nothing, ſpeaks of no- " thing but this alone: and imagines that every " body elſe thinks of the ſame, and knows of " whom it ſpeaks." Divine Love this way work-eth towards its Object: *Chriſt dwelleth in the Heart of a Believer by Faith and Love; and if he withdraw himſelf, deny the uſual Tokens of his Favour: 'Tis an Affliction ſo real, ſo heavy, that no earthly Comfort can ſupport under it*, Cant. v. *v.* 6, 7. Let thy Love, O my Soul! thus appear in longing Deſires, in vi-gorous Sallies of Affection after him.

4thly, In delighting, in triumphing in his Pre-ſence, Favour, and Smiles: *We will be glad, and rejoice in thee; we will remember thy Love more than Wine*, Cant. i. 4. And to the ſame Purpoſe, v. 13, 14, 16. And again, *Chap.* ii. 4, 5. *He brought me to the Banquetting-Houſe, and his Banner over me was Love; Stay me with Flagons, comfort me with Apples, for I am ſick of Love.* " A Deſcription, " ſaith Dr. *Patrick*, of one falling into a Swoon, " by the Abundance of her Love; in which Caſe " Cordial Spices are wont to be called for to re- " vive ſuch Perſons, and keep them from fainting " quite away. Comfortable Smells alſo are wont " to be adminiſtred to the Noſe; which is the mean- " ing of calling here for fragrant Apples, *&c.* By " all which, the Church is repreſented to be ſo " marvellouſly affected with the Love of Chriſt, " as to be even oppreſſed under the Weight of " divine Benefits, and at a perfect Loſs what to " think of them; having little or nothing to " return for ſuch infinite Obligations." There is an Enjoyment of the bleſſed God, and of the Lord Jeſus, even in this Life, which affords a little Hea-

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ven to holy Souls, and is the Earneſt of the full Joys above. The Lovers of Chriſt underſtand this; know what I mean. *I charge you, O ye Daughters of* Jeruſalem, *that ye ſtir not up, nor awake my Love, till he pleaſe*, Chap. iii. 5. Thus, O my Soul! expreſs thy Love to thy Redeemer; reckon that *in his Favour is Life, and that his loving Kindneſs is better than Life. I found him whom my Soul loved; I held him, and would not let him go*, ſaith the Spouſe, *Cant.* iii. 4. Cleave to him; don't willingly part with ſo great a Treaſure; prefer it to thy chiefeſt Joy: And if there be any little low Souls that deſpiſe theſe Things, as *Cant* and *Enthuſiaſm*, pity their Ignorance and Folly: But ſure thou knoweſt better, than to be moved with a flat, inſipid Jeſt, pronounced from the Chair of the Scorner. There's a Loyalty in the Heart of Chriſt's Spouſe, that makes his Love her choiceſt Cordial and Refreſhment. *He is come, he is come*, ſaid a ſerious Perſon with a ſort of Triumph, after ſome Diſtance and Eſtrangement. Love him, O my Soul! ſeek him with the reſt of the *Virgins*; and never think thou loveſt him to Purpoſe, till thou findeſt his Preſence thy Solace, thy Life, thy Heaven.

5thly, Shew thy Love by a Zeal for his Name and Honour; a Devotedneſs to his Intereſt, and a conſtant Readineſs to ſerve him all the Ways thou canſt. *Loveſt thou me*, ſaith Chriſt to *Peter?* And then adds, as a ſpecial Evidence of his Love, *feed my Lambs, feed my Sheep*, John xxi. 15, 16. Conſider which way thou mayeſt advance his Kingdom, and promote the great Deſign he came into the World for: And let the Zeal of Love carry thee through any Service, how expenſive ſoever, that may be acceptable to him. Lord, quicken me by thy Grace; may I be able to ſay, *for me to live in Chriſt*: May all the Lines of Converſation centre in

him; may I think, contrive, project, ſpeak, act, and live for him, and to him; making it my *Meat and Drink to do his Will*; employing my Time, Talents, all my Faculties and Abilities; all I have and am for his Honour. Grant, Lord, a more abundant Effuſion of thy Spirit. Let me feel more the conſtraining Power of thy Love; enlarge my Heart, and I'll run the Way of thy Commandments.

6thly, Shew thy Love to him, by loving, relieving, ſuccouring, and helping his Members, according to thy Capacities and Opportunities. Oh! may I remember that comfortable, and yet monitory Word: *Foraſmuch as ye have done it to one of the leaſt of theſe my Brethren, ye have done it unto me*, Matt. xxv. 40. There's a Love of Compaſſion and of Beneficence due to the human Species, as ſuch. Οὐκ ἀνθρώπῳ ἀλλ' ἀνθρωπίνῳ, anſwered the Philoſopher, when one accuſed him of throwing away his Bounty upon an undeſerving Perſon, *I did it not to the Man, but to Humanity*: But thoſe that bear his Image ſhou'd be eſpecially dear to us; *He that loved him that begets, loves him alſo that is begotten.* Lord, may thoſe thou vouchſafeſt to call *Brethren* be ever dear to me: Help me to love them for thy Sake, and in loving them expreſs my Love to thee.

7thly, Shew it by Obedience to his Commands. This he himſelf has propoſed, as the great Teſt of our Love, *John* xiv. 23. *If a Man love me, he will keep my Sayings.* And *ver.* 24. *He that loveth me not, keepeth not my Words.* Had I the Tongue of an Angel, did I pretend to the Devotion of a Seraph, it wou'd not prove me a lover of Chriſt, without Subjection of Heart to his Authority, and a Life governed by his Precepts, O my Soul! herein be faithful; get the Law of thy Redeemer wrote on thy

thy Heart, and by an even, ſteady, chearful, conſtant, univerſal Obedience manifeſt thy Love.

8thly, Show thy Love to him by longing to be with him. 'Tis one Deſcription of the Saints, that they *love his Appearing*, 2 Tim. iv. 8. Think with Pleaſure of that glorious Day, when thy preſent Eſpouſals, and Marriage-Contract ſhall be conſummated; wait with patience, and yet with an earneſt rejoicing Hope, ſtill crying out, Come, Lord Jeſus, come quickly, Amen!

O my Soul! addreſs thyſelf to this Work; thus to love, and thus to teſtify thy Love. Chriſt has loved thee, and ſo loved, as no Words can expreſs, no Actions of thine fully requite: Never, never forget his Love. *Xenophon* mentions an *Armenian* Prince, who being taken captive, with his Queen by *Cyrus*; and being asked if he deſired to have his Liberty, his Kingdom and Queen reſtored; anſwered; for my Liberty and Kingdom, I value them not; but if my Blood wou'd redeem my Wife, I wou'd chearfully give it. Afterwards, *Cyrus* having reſtored him all, he asked his Queen what a one *Cyrus* was; the Lady replied I know not, my Mind was ſo taken up with the Man, that wou'd give his Life for my Ranſom, that I could think of no other. My Lord has actually done what is here ſaid to be *offered only*, and exceedingly out-done it; has ranſom'd me with his Blood, more precious Blood; may I feel the like Reſentment; may he be fixed in my Heart: and may my whole Intereſt, Power, Life, and all be made a ſacred *Holocauſt* to him, offer'd up on the Altar of Love.

On the Crucifixion of CHRIST.

A Sixth Specimen

Ὁ Ἐμὸς ἔρως ἐσταύρωται, *My Love was crucified,* ſaith the devout Martyr *Ignatius*; he that loved me, as ſome underſtand him, and whoſe Nature is Love; And did ever Love break forth in a more glorious Flame! Turn aſide, O my Soul! and ſee this great Sight. *And when they were come to the Place which is called* Calvary, *there they crucified him, and the Malefactors, one on the Right Hand, and the other on the left,* Luke xxiii. 33. THEY CRUCIFIED HIM! Put him to Death upon a Croſs.

Let me conſider a little the Nature and Quality of this Death. And (1ſt.,) I may obſerve, that this Manner of Chriſt's Death was not an accidental Thing, owning to an haſty Reſolution of his Enemies, but appointed of God, and frequently foretold: It was foretold and repreſented by Types; as by the *brazen Serpent,* Numb. xxi. 9. Which our *Lord* himſelf expounds to this Senſe, *John* iii. 14. *As* Moſes *lifted up the brazen Serpent in the Wilderneſs, ſo muſt the Sun of Man be lifted up.* The Paſchal Lamb alſo ſeems a Type of the Crucifixion of Chriſt. The Law expreſly ordered, that not a *Bone* of the Lamb ſhou'd be broken, *Exod.* xii. 46. Which the *Evangeliſt* applies to this Matter, *John* xix. 36. Sygnifying, that Chriſt ſhou'd die a Death, in which the breaking of the Legs was uſual. Some tell us (which makes the Type and Reſemblance more lively) that the Spit, on which the Paſchal Lamb was roaſted, was contrived after the Manner of a Croſs; inſomuch that the ſpitted Paſchal appeared a ſort of a Crucifix. This is mention'd by *Juſtin Martyr,* and others: So that here we have

an early Repreſentation of this great Event: The Lamb of God ſlain, and even crucified from the Foundation of the World.

It was foretold by Prophecy. *Zechary* ſpeaks of it in the plaineſt Terms, *Chap.* xii. 10. *They ſhall look upon him whom they have pierced.* As doth *David*, Pſal. xxii. 16. *They pierced my Hands and my Feet.* Which he ſpeaks in the Perſon of Chriſt, as is evident from *ver.* 1. *My God, My God, why haſt thou forſaken me*; the very Language of Chriſt upon the Croſs. Chriſt himſelf foretold it often, *Matt.* 20. 18, 19. *John* xii. 32, 33. *I, if I be lifted up*, &c. *Which he ſaid, ſignifying what Manner of Death he ſhould die:* So that when the *Gentiles*, and People of *Iſrael* conſpired againſt Chriſt, they did no other than what *God's hand and Counſel had determined before to be done*, Acts iv. 28. *Chriſt ought to ſuffer theſe Things, and enter into his Glory*, Luke xxiv. 26. To ſuffer, and to ſuffer *theſe very Things*, and in this manner; to die, and to die upon the Croſs: This was the Voice of the Law and the Prophets. Behold here, O my Soul! an Accompliſhment of antient Predictions; an Evidence that Jeſus is the Meſſiah; and let thy Faith reſt in him. This is he that was to come, nor needeſt thou look for another.

2dly, Crucifixion was a Death exquiſitely *painful.* Hence 'tis ſaid, he *endured the Croſs*, Heb. xii. 2. The Manner of it, in ſhort, was this. His Body was faſtened to an erect, and his Hands to a tranſverſe Beam, and both *Hands and Feet pierced with Nails*; dug, as the *Pſalmiſt* expreſſes it, *Pſal.* xxii. 16. And as theſe are the moſt nervous Parts of the Body, they muſt conſequently be more ſenſible of Pain: And in this Poſture he hung upon the Croſs for ſeveral Hours; dying a languiſhing Death, and feeling many Deaths in one. Some have

have thought the curious Frame, and fine Contexture of Chriſt's Body wou'd make his Senſe of Pain more quick and lively. 'Tis certain, it was to *all* an exceeding painful Death; and therefore the *Romans* borrow the Word, by which they expreſs Torment in their Language, from the Croſs; *Cruciatus* from *Crux*.

3^dly, It was a Death *full of Shame* and Ignominy, and therefore proper to Slaves, or Strangers, guilty of the moſt enormous Crimes. Hence *Cicero*, in his Oration againſt *Verres*, mentions it as an high Offence, that he had cauſed ſome *Freemen* to be crucified. "'Tis a great Fault, ſaith he, to "lay a Freeman of *Rome* in Bonds; worſe to "ſcourge him; and ſtill worſe to take away his "Life. *Quid dicam in crucem tollere*; but what "ſhall I ſay of crucifying him?" He intimates that this was ſo great an Indignity offered to a Citizen, that Words cou'd not expreſs the Vileneſs of him that wou'd be the Contriver and Author of it: And yet this Death did the Son of God ſubmit to. The Lord of the World ſtoops to be *Crucified*; undergoes the Puniſhment and Death of a poor Slave, and is content to be numbred with the worſt Tranſgreſſors!

5^thly, It was alſo a *curſed* Death. *He that's hang'd, is accurſed of God*, Deut. xxi. 23. All that ſuffered that Death, and were hung upon a Tree, were look'd upon as great Sinners, under the Diſpleaſure and Curſe of Heaven; and accordingly were thus expoſed to the View of the World; *were hung up between Heaven and Earth, as unworthy of either*; nor cou'd they be buried, and have the common Privilege of other dead, to be cover'd in the Earth, till they had remain'd for a Time a Spectacle and Warning to the Living. *Chriſt* in being crucified was thus accurſed, *Gal.* iii. 13. He was

made a Curſe for us; herein a Curſe. Crucifying was like Gibbetting, as practis'd among us, and uſed very much for the ſame Ends and Purpoſes; "as a Signification of ſome heinous Wickedneſs "committed, and a Monument of publick Juſtice "and Vengeance againſt the Offender." And thus was the Son of God dealt with; he was hung up between two Malefactors, *and made his Grave with the wicked*, Iſa. liii. 9. Never was ſo much Innocency thus clouded! So much Glory thus obſcured before! *He endured the Croſs, deſpiſing the Shame*, Heb. xii. 2.

5thly, There were ſome Circumſtances attending the Crucifixion of Chriſt, that very much aggravated the Suffering of it. *Barabbas*, an infamous Tranſgreſſor, was preferred before him; by which the People declared, as by a publick Voice and Suffrage, that bad as *Barabbas* was, *Jeſus* was worſe. He was openly ſcourged, and delivered up to the Rabble to be abuſed and inſulted; who accordingly, in Deriſion, put on him a Scarlet Robe, and for a Crown, a Wreath of Thorns, with a Reed in his Hand for a Sceptre: And when they had mocked his Sovereignty, and with the utmoſt Rudeneſs, made Sport with him; they ſmite him on the Face, and ſtrike him on the Head: And having this way ſufficiently gratified their Malice, they ſtrip him of the Royal Robes given him in Scorn; cloath him with his own Garments, and ſo lead him away, with his Croſs on his Shoulders, to be crucified; when he's placed between two Malefactors, the better to leave an Impreſſion on the Minds of the People, that he was an Impoſtor, and at leaſt equally guilty with them: And here (after he had born the repeated Inſults of the Multitude, *Matt.* xxviii. 39——45.) he expires; *My God, my God*, (ſaith he) *why haſt thou forſaken me?* and ſo gives up the Ghoſt. Lord,

Lord, what ſhall I ſay to this! Thoughts are ſwallowed up; what a Myſtery, what a Miracle of Grace and Love! View it, O my Soul! come near, and contemplate with Wonder and Praiſe. Lord, teach me the proper Leſſons of this Doctrine; help me to underſtand it aright; to apply and improve it aright.

A Second Meditation on the ſame SUBJECT.

AND (1ſt,) how great an Event is this, and with what Reverence ſhou'd I entertain the Subject! The Son of God, whom all the Angels of God are commanded to worſhip, hung upon a Croſs, loaded with Reproach and Scorn, tortured and racked, bleeding and dying! Never was there ſuch a Spectacle as this offer'd to the Eyes of Mortals! It ſtruck a ſort of Terror into the whole Creation; as we read in the Hiſtory, *Matt.* xxvii. 45, 51, 52, &c. *The Sun hid its Face; the Veil of the Temple was rent in twain; the Earth quaked; the Rocks* were *rent; the Graves opened,* and even his Enemies are ſeiz'd with Amazement, and made to relent. *Truly this,* ſay they, *was a righteous Perſon, this was the Son of God,* v. 45. It wou'd be a Reproach to the Wiſdom of God, not to ſuppoſe there muſt be ſomething of high Importance aimed at in this Providence. 'Tis the Part of Wiſdom to proportion the Means to the End: There wou'd not have been ſuch a ſolemn *Apparatus* and Introduction to a Trifle. Can we imagine the bleſſed God, Righteous, Wiſe, and Holy in all his Works, wou'd have ſent his Son into this World, have appointed him to a State of ſo much Abaſement;

ſuffer'd him to have fallen into the Hands of his Enemies, expoſed him to all this Contempt and Sorrow, but upon ſome great Deſign! Every Step towards this Event was the Ordination of Heaven, the Contrivance of infinite Wiſdom; and the thing itſelf the chief of the Works of God; the Son of God on the Croſs! The Sun could not behold the Tragedy; the Earth trembled under it; it was the Amazement of Angels, and Terror of Devils! View it, O my Soul! with all Reverence. The *Apoſtle* determined to know nothing but Chriſt and him crucified; and indeed the Subject challengeth thy cloſeſt Attention.

2dly, Of what infinite Conſequence is the Salvation of the Soul? What a Value doth this put upon it? and what a Wretch muſt he be, that makes Light of that which was thus purchaſed! *We have Redemption, and Salvation through his Blood.* This was in general the End Chriſt died for, *viz.* To deliver us from Wrath to come, and reſtore us to the Favour and Enjoyment of God; for this he became a Victim, a Curſe, and ſuffered the Ignominy and Pain of the Croſs. And ſhall I contemn what he thus valued, and neglect what coſt him thus dear? May I never deſpiſe my own Soul, deſpiſe that Blood that purchaſed it: Surely Salvation is too important a Thing to be jeſted with. Oh! learn thy own Dignity in the Price of thy Redemption. To ſave thee, *the Word was made Fleſh*, became a Man, and died a Sacrifice: For this he ſweat in the Garden, and bled on the Croſs. How ſhall I eſcape if I neglect ſo great Salvation!

3dly, What an Abhorrence ſhou'd this give me of Sin? Retire, O my Soul! to *Gethſemane*; go up to *Golgotha*; ſet thyſelf under the Croſs of Chriſt; think over the amazing Tragedy, in all its

its Circumſtances and Particulars; and thence learn the Nature of Sin; read it in his Agonies and Sorrows, in his Bloody Sweat, in his *Lama ſabacthani:* Never doth Sin appear more exceeding ſinful, more like itſelf, an hateful, accurſed Thing, than in the Glaſs of Chriſt's Sufferings! So deteſtable is it in the Eyes of God, that he did not think it conſiſtent with the Honour of his Government, to pardon it, without a Sacrifice; *and this muſt be the Blood of his own Son! He was delivered for our Offences,* Rom. iv. 25. *He was bruiſed for our Iniquities,* Iſa. liii. 5. Though he was taken and ſlain by wicked Hands, our Sins were the procuring Cauſe. Theſe were the Nails, the Thorns, the Spear that pierced him. " * The Traitor, which " by the Hands of *Judas* delivered him up. We " were the Perſons who, by our Sins, did impeach " him; the ſpiteful Prieſts were but our Advo- " cates. We, by them, did judge and ſentence " him; *Pilate* was but our Spokeſman. We, by " them, did inflict that horrid Puniſhment on him; " the *Roman* Executioners were but our Agents " herein. He became a Curſe for us, *i. e.* all the " Deriſion, Mockery, and Contempt he endured, " did proceed from us: The ſilly People were but " Tools, acting our Parts; our Sins were they that " cried out, *Crucify him, crucify him,* with Cla- " mours more loud, and more effectual, than did " all the *Jewiſh* Rabble. It was they that by the " Hands of the fierce Soldiers, and rude Populacy, " as by ſenſeleſs Engines, did buffet and ſcourge " him, did pierce his Fleſh, and rend his ſacred " Body: Upon them therefore 'tis juſt and fit that " we ſhould turn our Hatred, and diſcharge our In- " dignation." It was Sin that brought Chriſt from the Throne to the Cradle, the Manger and the Croſs: It was againſt *that* the divine Juſtice proceeded;

* Dr. *Barrow.*

proceeded; againſt *that* the divine Diſpleaſure was kindled. O my Soul! let Sin be thy Averſion, thy Hatred and Dread for ever: A common Execution, in which publick Juſtice takes place, ſtrikes an Awe into Spectators, and begets a Reverence of the Law, and of Authority; and is deſigned to deter from the like Tranſgreſſions, for which the like Vengeance is due. And can I behold the Son of God crucified; a moſt amazing Inſtance of divine Juſtice, and of his Abhorrence of Sin! and not abhor it alſo? Shall I love that which God hates, and manifeſted his Hatred of, in ſo great a Degree, as not to ſpare his own Son, when he ſtood in the Place of Sinners? He muſt ſhed his Blood, or no Remiſſion. Lord, help me to conſider the Wounds, the Death, the Croſs of my Saviour, the Strictneſs and Severity of thy Juſtice, and thence judge what Sin is, and how to ſtand affected towards it.

4thly, How much Peace and Comfort may this afford the Penitent Believer? *Who is he that condemneth, 'tis Chriſt that died?* Rom. viii. 34. *The Croſs of Chriſt is the Chriſtian's Triumph*, Gal. vi. 14. *He hath made Peace through the Blood of his Croſs*, Col. i. 20. *In whom we have Redemption thro' his Blood, even the Forgiveneſs of Sins*, Epheſ. i. 7. And canſt thou, O my Soul! queſtion this Redemption, this Forgiveneſs, when 'tis the Price of Blood, and of ſuch Blood! Will he not pardon Sin? Why then did he appoint and accept a Sacrifice, ſuch a Sacrifice! Oh, diſmiſs thy Fears and Jealouſies; turn unto God and he will abundantly pardon. Chriſt's Blood is a ſovereign Balm for a wounded Spirit: 'Tis a glorious Means of Atonement, a ſtanding Evidence of God's Reconcileableneſs; a Monument of his rich Mercy and Grace; a Token of his Goodneſs and Love, and Readineſs to bleſs with all ſpiritual Bleſſings in him. *He that ſpared not his*

own

own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how ſhall he not with him freely give us all Things? Rom. viii. 32. After this greater, this comprehenſive Foundation-bleſſing, I ſhall never queſtion any leſſer, lower Bleſſing; eſpecially when the former was a Pledge of the latter, and deſign'd to purchaſe and inſure it. He that gave his Son, and delivered him up to be crucified for thee, won't deny any Thing elſe that's good for thee.

6thly, What an Argument this to an Indifferency to the preſent World, to a Contempt of its Pomps and Pleaſures? The Son of God paſſed through Poverty, Reproach, Perſecution, and at laſt expired upon the Croſs! His Employment was that of a *Carpenter*, his Eſtate the Basket, and the charitable Contributions of his mean Followers; his Titles Wine-bibber, Friend of Publicans and Sinners; Traitor, Deceiver, Dæmoniack, Beelzebub, *&c.* His Scepter a Reed; his Crown Thorns; his Life Hunger, Thirſt, Wearineſs; and his Death Crucifixion! This was the State of Things with the Son of God; which affords us a full Conviction of the Truth of what he ſaith, *John* xviii. 36. *My Kingdom is not of this World.* O my Soul! ſeekeſt thou great Things for thy ſelf? Seek them not; dream not of Eaſe, Honour and Happineſs here below; to affect them is incongruous for the Diſciples of a crucified Jeſus: And indeed to fall into the *Jewiſh* Fancy of their *Ben David*, a temporal, triumphant Monarch. Chriſt the Head of the Church was abaſed and humbled; his Members muſt be, in this reſpect, in a great Meaſure, conform'd to him: *ſuffer with him, that they may be glorified together*, Rom. viii. 17. O my Soul! look at the Croſs and be inſtructed: *Cogitemus Crucem ejus & divitias lutum putabimus*, ſaith the Father: Let us meditate on the Croſs of Chriſt,

and we ſhall trample the Riches and Glories of this World as Dirt under our Feet. "If with "the Eyes of our Minds, ſaith one, we do be- "hold our Lord, hanging naked upon a Gibbet, "beſmeared with his own Blood, groaning under "extream Anguiſh of Pain, encompaſſed with all "ſorts of diſgraceful Abuſes; will not the Imagi- "nation of ſuch a Sight dim the Luſtre of all "earthly Grandeurs and Beauties, damp the Senſe "of all carnal Delights and Satisfactions? *&c.*" Lord, may I be a true Diſciple of the Croſs; dead to the Flatteries and Vanities of this World. Grant me the Humility and Mortification thy Croſs preaches. May I learn of thee, who waſt meek and lowly; glory in thy Croſs, and thereby become crucified to the World, and the World to me!

7thly, How powerful a Motive doth this afford to Gratitude and Obedience? This is an Inſtance of Love full of Wonder. Oh! may it have equal Conſtraint: What Service ſhould I grudge for my deareſt Lord, who thought not a Crucifixion too coſtly an Evidence of his Love to me? O my Soul! look to a bleeding, dying Saviour; place thy ſelf under his Croſs; view him in all his Circumſtances of Ignominy and Sorrow; remember this he ſuffer'd on thy Account, and thence infer thy Obligations to him. Let this Inſtance of his Obedience be the Example and Motive of thine: Love him, live to him, who has thus loved and died for thee, ſo that henceforth that may be thy *Motto*. *Chriſtus Crucifixus Cordifixus*; *My Love was Crucified.*

And thus I have offer'd ſome Specimens of the more perfect, compleat Method of Meditation; not that I expect that every one, or indeed any one, in the ſtated Courſe of their Cloſet Devotions, ſhould imitate theſe Patterns: But as the Sub-

jects

jects I have chosen are of the greatest Importance, I thought it might not be unacceptable to some Readers, to find them inlarged upon, though it be more than was necessary to my particular Design, which was to give Examples of Meditation, as to Method and Order especially. What I expect from the more intelligent Christians, and recommend to them, if they attempt any thing this Way, is that they proceed in some such Method. First explain their Subject, then prove, illustrate, and so go on to admonish and expostulate with themselves; form Resolutions, Soliloquies, Colloquies, *&c.* as the Matter may require; which may be done in more or fewer Essays at different times; and with greater or less Exactness, according to their different Abilities, Furniture, Leisure, and Frame of their Minds. And if after all, these Specimens be thought less fit for Imitation, I would willingly hope the Matter of them will not be without Instruction to the Generality of Christians, on which Account they will more readily excuse them.

SECT.

SECT. IX.

I now proceed to ſome Specimens or Examples of Meditation in a looſer Method, which the more judicious Chriſtians may be able in ſome Meaſure to imitate, at leaſt in their better Hours, and moſt devotional Frames; I mean as to the Method and Order, how much ſoever they fall ſhort as to the Stile and Thought.

Of GRACE.

1 COR. XV. 10. *By the Grace of God I am what I am.*

Firſt Specimen.

SOME have been pleas'd to obſerve that nothing is more talk'd of by Chriſtians, eſpecially ſince the Days of St. *Auſtin*, than Grace, and yet that nothing is leſs underſtood. The *Jeſuit*, no Queſtion thought himſelf witty, that ſaid Grace was *neſcio quid*, an unintelligible imaginary Thing, a ſuppos'd ſomething, but no Body knows what. Nor are they content to reduce it to a mere Name, a Sound without Meaning; but the very Name is become contemptible with many, treated with a ſort of Ridicule as a Term of Cant, only fit for *Enthuſiaſts*, or at beſt dull old faſhioned Divines.

Others retain the Word, have it frequently in their Mouth, but groſly abuſe it; debaſing the Idea of it, and turning it into a Jeſt. Grace with them only ſtands for good Husbandry, frugal Management in following the Affairs of this World:

If

If it pleaſe God, ſay they, ſpeaking of their Children, to give them Grace; when they manifeſtly intend no more than a ſort of ſecular Wiſdom or Sagacity, care to improve their Patrimony, to get or ſave an Eſtate. This is Grace with them, all they ſeem to deſire or have any notion of. Shameful Proſtitution! O my Soul, enter not thou into their ſecret! Surely Grace is too divine, too ſacred a Thing to be thus trifled with: And indeed when I find it ſtanding in my Bible with ſuch high Characters; find ſuch great Things every where aſcribed to it, the Intereſts and Comforts of the Church ſo much carried on and ſerved by it, I can't but look upon it as *venerable*, and accordingly would entertain it: Help me, O my God, better to underſtand this divine and glorious Subject; afford me ſome Rays of the Light; the preſent Aſſiſtance of thy Grace, that I may celebrate and praiſe it in a due Manner, and ſet forth the Wonders thereof.

Grace is a Term of different Acceptation in Scripture, particularly in the new Teſtament, where it more frequently occurs. It often ſignifies the *favour and good Will of God. Thou haſt found favour*, or Grace *with God*, Luke i. 30. *Jeſus increaſed in favour*, or Grace, *with God and Man*, Luke ii. 52. *The Grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant*, 1 Tim. i. 14. and thus we are ſaid to be *called by his Grace*, Gal. i. 15. to be *juſtified by his Grace*, Rom. iii. 24. to have *Redemption thro'* the Blood of Chriſt, *according to the Riches of his Grace*, Eph. i. 7. *to be ſaved by his Grace*, Eph. ii. 8. Grace is the divine Benevolence with the Effects and Fruits of it; the goodneſs of God iſſuing forth towards his Creatures: As it reſpects the indigent and neceſſitous, it may be called bounty; as it reſpects the guilty and miſerable, 'tis Mercy; as it reſpects the unworthy, 'tis Grace. In a Word, Grace is the divine Love, under the Notion of acting freely.

Grace

Grace ſometimes ſignifies the Goſpel; as Rom. vi. 14. *ye are not under the Law but under Grace*, that is, under the Goſpel: And the ſame Senſe it has, 2 Cor. vi. 1. Tit. ii. 12.

It ſometimes ſignifies the divine Power exerted in the Hearts of Men; the Influences and Operations of God's Spirit enlightning, quickning, renewing, changing, &c. And this may be conſider'd either in the firſt ſpecial Inſtance, as at Converſion; or as diſplayed in the after Conduct and Supply of the Soul. The former is called by ſome Divines *Gratia operans*, Grace working *in us*; the latter *Gratia cooperans*, Grace working *with us*, the Terms being borrowed from the Schools. The Scripture affords Inſtances of both: Of the former, Gal. i. 15—*called me by his Grace*, Acts xviii. 27. —*helped them much who had believed thro' Grace*: Of the latter, 1 Cor. xv. 10. *I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the Grace of God which was with me.* If any object againſt the Interpretation of theſe Texts, the Thing it ſelf pleaded for is frequently aſſerted in other Scriptures. *'Tis God* that *worketh in you, both to will and to do of his* own *good Pleaſure*, Phil. ii 13. The God of Peace *make you perfect in every good Work, working in you that which is well-pleaſing in his Sight, thro' Jeſus Chriſt*, Heb. xiii. 21. *The Lord opened Lydia's Heart*, Acts xvi. 14. *We are* ſaid to be *his Workmanſhip, created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good Works*, Eph. ii. 10. to *be willing in the Day of* his *Power*, Pſal. cx. 3. The Day of Power in the Day of God's Grace; when he puts forth *the exceeding greatneſs of his Power* towards them that *believe*, Eph. i. 19. This is one notion of Grace; it ſignifies the divine Concurrence and Aſſiſtance; the divine Agency and Influence upon the Hearts of Men, by which they are quickened, enlightned, transformed, and afterwards eſtabliſhed, conducted, furniſhed for all the Duties

Duties of their Course and Warfare. God strengthens *us by his Spirit with might in the inward Man*, Eph. iii. 16.

Grace sometimes signifies a divine Quality or Temper produc'd in us; the Effect of God's powerful Operation: As when we are bid to *grow in Grace*, 2 Pet. iii. 18. to *be strong in the Grace that is in Christ Jesus*, 2 Tim. ii. 1. And thus Grace is the same with *the divine Nature*, 2 Pet. i. 4. The several *Fruits of the Spirit* mentioned, Gal. v. 22, 23. as *Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, and Temperance*, are Graces; so many distinct and particular Graces; divine Habits of the Mind, which the Holy Spirit implants and worketh in us. I don't think it worth while to dispute whether it be most proper to call them *moral Virtues or Graces:* As they are the Fruit of the Spirit, have him for their Author, they are divine in their Rise, Nature, and Tendency, and saving in their Issue, are perfectly the same Thing, whatever Name we give them: Lord grant me these Excellencies, all of them, and all in fuller Measure; and I shall think my self Happy; nor will it make any difference in my Estimation or Enjoyment, whether we call them Graces or Virtues.

This is the Scripture Account of Grace. I'm sensible some make it a Question whether there be sufficient Reason for all this distinction; and are ready to determine that Grace means nothing else in Scripture, but the Favour and Kindness of God: It may be the Matter might be accommodated with them by a Concession not injurous to Truth; that this is the strict and proper Notion of Grace, and what runs thro', and may be preserv'd in all the Instances that have been mentioned. Thus the Gospel is called Grace, as 'tis an eminent Discovery of the Favour and good Will of God towards Sinners. The divine Energy and Operation upon the

Heart is Grace, on the ſame Account, as it flows from the divine Favour and Goodneſs, was excited and influenc'd thereby, both in the Beginning and Proceſs of the Work. The ſeveral particular Virtues that adorn the Mind of the Believer; all theſe are Grace, expreſſions of divine Favour and Goodneſs: So that tho' Grace is apply'd to different Things in Scripture, there's no need to depart from the primary Notion of it. The Goſpel is Grace; the Operation of the Spirit on the Hearts of Men, and the Effects thereof in inward Regeneration, and in all the Parts of the new Creature are Grace; each of them, all of them may be termed Grace, as in them all the Love and Kindneſs of God our Saviour appears.

And oh my God! how much am I a Debtor to thy Grace: help me to recount my Obligations; often to renew the Hiſtory of it, with that humble, admiring, adoring thankfulneſs that becomes me: *By the Grace of God I am what I am.* I had been nothing, worſe than nothing, without thy Grace; a carnal, ſecure, ſtupid Creature; ſinful, ſenſual, every Way vile; a loſt undone Creature, with the Heart of a Brute here, and of a Devil hereafter! Pauſe, O my Soul! and look back a little on the Wonders of divine Grace, the ſurprizing Story of it with all dutiful and loyal Aſcriptions, ſtill ſaying, Oh, that I could ſay it with ſuitable Devotion, *By the Grace of God I am what I am.*

'Tis by the Grace of God that I am a Chriſtian, that I enjoy the Light and Teaching, and the many Advantages of the Goſpel Diſpenſation; that the Sun of Righteouſneſs has aroſe upon me with healing in his Wings; while ſo many ſit in Darkneſs, and in the Region and Shadow of Death: Lord this is an act of thy Favour and Kindneſs, a Diſtinction of thy Providence; may I not receive thy Grace herein in vain. 'Tis

'Tis by the Grace of God that I am a Convert, transform'd by the renewing of my Mind; have been brought to engage, heartily to engage in the Service, and made to taſte the Comforts of the Goſpel; have been enclin'd to take Chriſt's eaſy and honourable Yoke upon me; and that whilſt others ſtand in the Market Place all the Day idle; only play and trifle with a dull form of Religion; are not initiated by any internal teaching and divine Unction: Which alas! is the Caſe of great Numbers, that have had the ſame external Means and helps with my ſelf; the ſame Bible and Miniſtry; and of ſome it may be that have had the ſame Parents and Education: And who has made me to differ? Thy Grace, oh my God! Not my Will or Wiſdom, but thy Conduct; not my Merit, but thy Mercy. Thou haſt turned me from Darkneſs to Light, open'd my Heart, directed my Choice; for this I owe thee the higheſt Praiſes, in Heaven I ſhall praiſe thee. *By the Grace of God I am what I am.*

'Tis by the Grace of God that I have any of the Ornaments of a real Saint, a true Believer. Oh that herein I may not be miſtaken! that I am diſtinguiſhed by any of the Fruits of the bleſſed Spirit. Lord thy Power, thy Grace has planted theſe in my Soul. My Faith is of thy Operation. Thou haſt begotten me again to a lively Hope. Thou haſt ſhed abroad thy Love in my Heart, thro' the Holy Ghoſt, which thou haſt given me: Once I was a Servant of divers Luſts and Pleaſures defiled and polluted; thou haſt waſhed and cleanſed me, haſt made me *all glorious within*, and granted me the *Clothing of wrought Gold*. I own thy Hand and adore thy Grace herein.

'Tis by the Grace of God that I have been ſupported under all my Burdens and Conflicts, preſerv'd in all my Temptations, Dangers and Fears:

How many, how great the Salvations God has wrought out for me thro' my Courſe and Life? I remember at ſuch a Time a Concurrence of Exerciſes and Troubles exceedingly threatned me. *I ſaid my Foot ſlipeth, and then thy Mercy held me up.* I was *preſſed out of Meaſure above Strength, inſomuch that I deſpaired of* any Comfortable Iſſue, 2 Cor. i. 8. But thou, Lord, *haſt delivered my Soul from Death, my Eyes from Tears and my Feet from falling.* I remember the perplexed Thoughts, the gloomy Proſpects I had; *without were Fightings, within were Fears:* But God, who comforteth thoſe who are caſt down, comforted me. I remember the Means, the Manner and Circumſtances of this great Deliverance; to thy Name, O Lord, be the Praiſe——At ſuch a Time I was in the midſt of Snares and Temptations, and was preſerved by a Wonder of Providence and Grace, without ſeeing my Danger till it was over. God has often ſaved me by opening my Eyes that I might diſcern the Snares ſpread for me: This may not be intelligible to every Chriſtian, but ſome I doubt not know how to fill up the Vacancy. And I mention it as a Hint that we ſhould record the more remarkable Inſtances of divine Grace and Providence towards us in our Deliverances, and frequently have Recourſe to them for enlivening our Devotion. In this Inſtance he has ſaved me by ſhutting them, that I might not be taken by the Bait prepared: Oh! may I never forget the Wiſdom and Sovereignty of Grace herein, nor overlook the divine inviſible Hand, that was my Defence and Reſcue!

'Tis by the Grace of God that I have been aſſiſted in, and carried thro' all my Work and Duty as a *Chriſtian:* This has ſupplied me for the ſeveral Services of my Warfare. I can't ſay I have labour'd *abundantly*, much leſs *more abundantly* than others;

others; but if I have labour'd at all for God, and for the Intereſt of my own Soul; done any thing with Succeſs in Religion, I have the greateſt Reaſon to ſay, *not I, but the Grace of God that was with me.*

'Tis by the Grace of God that I have been conducted and led hitherto. This directed me to and in Religion; to the Profeſſion I have engaged in, and in many Circumſtances thereof. This has directed me in particular Difficulties and Straits: Often have I been at a Loſs concerning my Duty; and upon ſerious Application to God he has diſentangled my Thoughts; taken me by the Hand and pointed out to me the Way that I ſhould chooſe. I have had ſo much Experience of his ſpecial Light and Guidance, in ſeveral remarkable Inſtances of this Nature, that I can never queſtion it, and deſire never to forget it. Lord, I reſign all to thy Conduct; leave all my Affairs and Concerns with thee for the Future: Guide me by thy Counſel, and afterwards receive me to Glory.

'Tis by the Grace of God that I have perſever'd, held on my Way (oh that I could ſay with more Evidence I have waxed ſtronger and ſtronger!) that I have ſtood my Ground in the Chriſtian Profeſſion, not made Shipwreck of Faith and a good Conſcience: How much in Danger at ſuch a Time? and at ſuch a Time! when——But having obtain'd help of the Lord, I continue unto this Day. I adore thy Grace herein, oh my God! may I believe to the ſaving of my Soul.

'Tis by the Grace and Favour of God that I enjoy the many Privileges, Dignities and Bleſſings of the Chriſtian State and Covenant; that I am pardoned, juſtified, adopted; have the Teaching, Diſcipline and Comforts of God's Family; the Refreſhments and Delights of his Houſe; the Protection and Miniſtry of his Angels; the Promiſe and

Proſpect of a future Heaven: Lord, help me to celebrate thy Grace; it has been my Salvation, it ſhall be my Song for ever.

Second Specimen.

Of GRACE.

GAL. i. 15. *called me by his Grace.*

I can't but think the Diſtinction, common in Books of Divinity, pertinent and grounded upon Scripture, of an *external* and *internal* Call: Our Saviour ſeems to hint at it Matt. xx. 16. *Many are called, but few are choſen.* Many have the external that want the internal Call. Hence whole Churches and Communities of Chriſtians are repreſented in Scripture, *as called*; particularly the *Romans*, Chap. i. 6, 7. 'Tis not improbable but moſt of them had the internal ſaving Call, (effectual Grace more ordinarily attending the Diſpenſation of the Goſpel at that Time,) but ſome no queſtion had only the outward Call.

According to this Diſtinction the Church of Chriſt receives a different Denomination, *of viſible and inviſible:* All that are profeſſed Members of the Church; who are enter'd into it by Baptiſm, and own the Inſtitutions and Laws of the Goſpel, make the *viſible Church:* Such as are ſincere in their Profeſſion, who not only confeſs with the Mouth, but believe with the Heart, are the *inviſible Church.* The one are the *Tares*, the other the *Wheat.* The one the fooliſh, the other the wiſe Virgins; as in the Goſpel Parables. Both make a Profeſſion; both carry their Lamps, and go forth to meet the Bridegroom; but the one have Oil, laſting Oil, in their Veſſels with their Lamps, which the other have not. *God has called them by his Grace*; and theſe are term'd the *inviſible Church:* Becauſe their Faith, Hope,

Hope, Love, Fear, all the glorious Ornaments of their Minds, the great Principles of their Obedience, are *inviſible* and out of Sight. Their Profeſſion is open and ſeen, as well as that of others: but their inward Principles, by which they are diſtinguiſhed, lie concealed. *The World knows us not*, 1 John iii. 1. The Lord knows, and he only, who are his.

'Tis indeed no ſmall Privilege to be a Member of the viſible Church; to have a Station in God's Church, tho' it be only in the *outer Courts*, and as a Candidate for Religion: And among other Mercies of my Life I would be thankful for this; that I was born in a Chriſtian Country, early inſtructed in the Doctrines, Principles and Duties of the Chriſtian Religion, and by ſacred Baptiſm enter'd among the Diſciples and Followers of the Lord Jeſus; that I have had the Admonition, Diſcipline, Teaching, and Example of Chriſtian Parents; that I have ſat at the Poſts of Wiſdom's Gates; have enjoy'd the Holy Bible, and the ſeveral Advantages of God's Houſe and Ordinances. I bleſs thee, oh my God! for this Diſtinction of thy Favour; *for the Call of thy Providence* into thy Church.

But I would not reſt here: This Call, if I attain no further will leave me ſhort of Heaven, Mat. vii. 21, 22, 23. Mat. xxv. 11, 12. 1 Cor. x. 1——6. 'Tis the *internal Call*, that diſtinguiſhes the true Chriſtian from the Hypocrite, the Members of the *inviſible* Church, from common Profeſſors, or the mere Members of the *viſible* Church. Lord grant me this Diſtinction; touch my Heart by thy Spirit, and enthrone thy ſelf there.

This Call the Scripture repreſents in different Terms and under different Notions; as by being born again by Repentance, Converſion, a new Heart, being transform'd by the renewing of the Mind, the Circumciſion of the Heart, partaking of the

divine Nature, *&c.* The ſame Thing is intended in all this Variety of Expreſſion. When God calls any by his Grace there is a univerſal Change made in the Temper and Frame of the Mind; in the Judgment, Will, Affections, and a new State introduc'd in the Soul. And 'tis of this Call the *Apoſtle* ſpeaks in his own Caſe, Gal. i. 15. *God called me by his Grace*; not only by his Favour, but by his powerful Operation, as appears from the Hiſtory of that Matter, *Acts* ix. And ſurely never was there a more illuſtrious Diſplay of Sovereign powerful Grace! In the midſt of his Rage and Fury, he's laid proſtrate in an inſtant, brought to the Foot of Chriſt with the loweſt Submiſſion, ſaying, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* One Word from Heaven diſarms him of all his Enmity, turns a Phariſee into a Chriſtian, a Perſecutor into a Preacher! 'Tis granted there was ſomething extraordinary in the Manner and Circumſtances of this Converſion; yet every Chriſtian experiences the ſame Grace in Kind; has the ſame effectual, powerful Call: *We are his Workmanſhip created in Chriſt Jeſus*, Eph. ii. 10. *Of his own Will begat he us by the Word of Truth*, Jam. i. 18. *Lydia's Heart was opened* as well as that of the Apoſtle *Paul*, Acts xvi. 14. And the like may be affirmed of every Believer, every genuine Member of the Chriſtian Church, it has pleaſed God to call him by his Grace.

How God operates on the Mind and Will, is a Queſtion not eaſy to be reſolved; but we muſt not deny every thing, the Manner of which we don't underſtand. We don't know how Body and Soul, Matter and Spirit are in vital Union, ſo that they have a mutual Influence upon one another; the Spirit working by the Body, and uſing its Organs at Pleaſure, commanding by a Thought and Act of the Will the ſeveral Members thereof. This

is

is fact, and what no Man will diſpute, and yet what no wiſe Man will undertake to explain: We are ſatisfied ſo it is, but how it is we know not; and indeed ſhould be ready to deny it *could be*, but that we are ſure it is: What Wonder then if we are puzled, and are forced to own Myſtery in things of an higher and more exalted Nature, in the Manner of one Spirits acting upon another? *The Wind bloweth where it liſteth*, ſaith our Saviour, *and thou heareſt the Sound thereof, but canſt not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth, and ſo is every one that is born of the Spirit*, John iii. 8. The working of God's Spirit is ſecret and myſterious, not ſo diſcernible in it ſelf as in its Effects: What have I done, ſays *Elijah* to *Eliſha*, when he *caſt his Mantle upon him*, and he was thereupon immediately determined to follow the Prophet, 1 *Kin.* xix. 19, 20. What God does to us when he calls us by his Grace; how he touches the Heart, and bows the Will, and gives an effectual Turn to the Soul, is above us fully to explain. The Work it ſelf is certain, experienc'd and known by good Men, manifeſt by the happy Conſequences of it, however abſtruſe and myſterious as to the Manner.

We may conclude in general that God works upon us in a Way ſuitable to our Faculties. The Will can't be forc'd, that's a Contradiction; nor muſt we ſuppoſe, that it's determined by mere phyſical Power, without Argument or Conviction: What if one conceive of the Matter thus, *When God is by his Grace reclaiming a Sinner, and ſetting up his Throne in the Heart, he begins, as in the firſt Creation, with a* fiat Lux, *let there be Light, ſhines in upon the Underſtanding; removes Prejudices, repreſents the Concerns of Religion in their Reality, Importance and Neceſſity, holds them before the Eyes of the Mind, awakens and fixes the Attention to them, and ſo by the Force of Light attracts and ſubdues the*

Heart: This, or ſomething of this Nature, I reckon, is what we intend by Grace, ſo far at leaſt as I can explain it; not denying in the mean Time any more direct and immediate Influences upon the Will. 'Tis certain the Obſtinacy and Enmity of that muſt be overcome; whether this is done by the Power of divine Light *only*, now filling the Mind, or by more immediate Influences upon that Faculty it ſelf, I cannot determine and ſhall not debate.

The Means God makes uſe of in this Work, and his Manner of proceeding therein, are various and different; ſometimes the Word read or heard; ſometimes a ſpecial Providence; a ſharp Affliction, or eminent Deliverance; one or other, it may be all of theſe ſucceſſively, are the Monitors; hereby the Sinner is made to pauſe, ſtand ſtill, and conſider; and often the Mind is ſo far impreſs'd, that like *Nebuchadnezzar* in his *Dreams, his Sleep breaketh from him*, Dan. ii. 1. And now Conſcience being rouz'd, and at leiſure, the Noiſe and Importunity of preſent Things ſuſpended, and for a while ſilenc'd, the Spirit of God does his Office; reads grave and ſerious Lectures, lays open former Deluſions, repreſents the Danger and Folly of a ſinful Courſe with ſuitable Life; points out the way of future Duty and Safety: Whereupon it may be there's an immediate Reſignation and Compliance: The awakened Sinner becomes proſtrate and cries out, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* being diſpos'd at this Time, under ſuch Diſcipline and divine Influence, to ſign a Blank; do every thing, any thing God ſhall appoint.

Sometimes the Work is done *more gradually*, and by Way of Treaty. The Soul is ſummon'd to ſurrender, beats a Parley; appears willing to hearken to Overtures of Peace; makes ſome good Eſſays in Religion; retireth, prayeth, *&c.* but the good Mood

Mood goes off; the Devil gains Advantage, and all iſſues in nothing except ſome faint Purpoſes and Promiſes for the Future; a common Deluſion by which awakened ſinners ſhake off their preſent Convictions: Afterwards, by the ſame, or it may be different Means, the Conviction is revived, and the Treaty renewed; and yet too often without Succeſs: The unhappy Creature hearkens to his Enemies, and like *Pharaoh* hardens his Heart and returns to Folly. And thus the matter may remain a conſiderable while before the Victory is won, the Sinner ſubdued, and God takes Poſſeſſion of the Soul by his Grace. Sometimes the Work is accompliſh'd *in a gentle mild Way*; and ſometimes with *more Terror and Bondage*; with a long Apparatus of Convictions, and amazing Viſions and Apprehenſions of Wrath. We have Inſtances of all this Variety in Scripture; as in the Call of ſome of Chriſt's firſt Diſciples, of the Apoſtle *Paul*, the Jaylor, *Zaccheus*, *Lydia*, the Prodigal in the Parable, &c. which I reckon may be looked upon as Specimens, Examples, and a ſort of Types of future Converſions. But however the Work is done 'tis certain God is the Author of it. He *calls by his Grace:* It receives its Riſe, Progreſs and Perfection from a divine Hand: He beginneth *a good Work in* us, and performeth it unto *the Day of Chriſt Jeſus*, Phil. i. 6.

Oh my Soul! look to him as the Author and Finiſher of thy Faith, in this as well as in other reſpects; review thy own Experiences in this Matter; enquire into the Evidences and Teſtimonies of thy Change. Has God called thee by his Grace? added the internal to the external Call? If ſo, fall before him with humble Adoration: 'Tis ſo important, ſo neceſſary and glorious a Work, that thou canſt never be enough thankful for it: 'Tis the Beginning of a new, a divine Life; the Pledge

and earneſt of eternal Life. The Apoſtle uſes it as an Argument with *Philemon* to admit his Interceſſion in behalf of *Oneſimus*, that *he owed him even his own ſelf*, *Philemon* Ver. 19. It ſeems he had been the Inſtrument of his Converſion and Call, and he ſignifies this was of ſuch Conſequence, that it gave the very Inſtrument a ſort of Title to him; intimating moreover that before his Converſion he was *loſt and worthleſs*; was not himſelf, had not himſelf, and that it was divine Grace that reſtored him to himſelf: So in the Parable Luke xv. 24. *This my Son was dead and is alive, was loſt and is found:* Haſt thou, oh my God! called me by thy Grace; on this Account, as well as others, *I owe thee even my own ſelf:* I was dead, thou haſt made me alive; I was loſt, thy Grace has found me; reclaim'd and recover'd me, reſtored me to the proper Uſe and Employment of my Faculties; brought me to live the Life of a reaſonable Creature; fitted me to move in the Sphere in which thou haſt ſet me, and anſwer the End for which thou haſt made me: How deprav'd, degenerate and ill was I? all Diſorder, Confuſion and Tumult within; Reaſon depoſed, Senſe and Appetite advanced to its Throne; fooliſh, diſobedient, ſerving divers Luſts and Pleaſures, reprobate to every good Work; but God called me by his Grace. Lord, I adore the Grace that has ſaved me. 'Tis by thy Grace *I am what I am. I owe thee my ſelf:* Help me to devote my ſelf to thee; that as thou haſt given me the Poſſeſſion and Enjoyment of my ſelf, all I have and am may henceforth be ſacred unto thee, be thine entirely and for ever.

Of

Of GRACE.

1 TIM. i. 14. *And the Grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant.*

EVERY Chriſtian is ſo much indebted to the Grace of God, that methinks he ſhould take a particular Pleaſure in celebrating and praiſing it. The Curious have their Emblems and Devices, with proper Motto's, by which they deſign Inſtruction, and Admonition ſuitable to the Subject they would adorn, and often therein they point at their own Tempers, State and Circumſtances, and intend a Teſtimony of Gratitude. No *Motto* certainly better fits the Chriſtian, than that the *Apoſtle* furniſhes him with, and ſeems to have choſen for himſelf, 1 Cor. xv. 10. *By the Grace of God I am what I am.* Lord 'tis by thy Grace that I am *any* thing, can do *any* thing that's good, and enjoy any thing that's comfortable. From this I have derived my paſt Bleſſings, on this depend my future Hopes. Had I the Faculties of a *Seraph*, the Tongue of Men and Angels, all would be too little to ſet forth the Riches and *exceeding Abundance* of thy Grace; it has followed me all my Days, fill'd my whole Life, every Scene and State of it; pardoning, ſupporting, delivering, conducting and ſaving me. *I would bleſs thee, oh God, my King, and praiſe thy Name for ever and ever.* But among all the kind and endearing Expreſſions of it, the firſt ſpecial Inſtance in my Converſion, or Call, is worthy of the greateſt Acceptation; and demands my moſt thankful Acknowledgments; herein the Grace of my Lord was *exceeding abundant:* Help me to contemplate it often, to look back upon it, for the quickening my Love, Gratitude and Obedience. *Third Specimen.*

I have

I have the great *Apoſtle* for my Monitor and Example here. He was a conſtant Advocate for Grace in all his Writings; but ſeems to ſingle out this Inſtance, as a Subject to exerciſe his warmeſt Affections. Accordingly he returns to it on all Occaſions, and goes thro' the Hiſtory of it with much Devotion, *Acts* xxii. *Acts* xxvi. And to the ſame Purpoſe, 1 *Cor.* xv. 8, 9, 10. *Laſt of all he was ſeen of me alſo, as of one born out of due time; for I am the leaſt of the Apoſtles, that am not meet to be called an Apoſtle, becauſe I perſecuted the Church of God; but by the Grace of God I am what I am,* &c. And again, 1 *Tim.* i. 13, 14, 16. *Who was before a Blaſphemer, a Perſecutor, and injurious; but I obtained Mercy. And the Grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant. For this Cauſe I obtained Mercy, that in me firſt Jeſus Chriſt might ſhew forth all Long-ſuffering, for a Pattern to them which ſhould hereafter believe on him to Life everlaſting.* How was his Heart fill'd with the Subject? It ſeems too big for his Expreſſion. *I obtained Mercy. The Grace of God was exceeding abundant. And for this Cauſe I obtained Mercy, that in me firſt he might ſhew forth all Long-ſuffering.* He ſeems to think himſelf the firſt *greateſt* Inſtance of Grace, and a ſort of Pattern and Specimen, according to which God would proceed with other *chiefeſt* of Sinners. And am not I another Example of the like Grace, *exceeding abundant Grace? In me*, ſecondly, *God has ſhewn forth all Long-ſuffering.* Bleſs the Lord, O my Soul! though thou canſt not riſe up to the Notes of this great and good Man, join in his Song, however, in the beſt Manner thou canſt. *Unto the King eternal, immortal, inviſible, the only wiſe God, be Honour and Glory for ever and ever.*

The *Apoſtle* might have ſomething peculiar in the Circumſtances in which the Grace of God found

found him, and in the manner of his Call; if my Caſe be not exactly parallel to his, I'm ſure 'tis ſuch, as requires the utmoſt Gratitude from me, and very much illuſtrates the Grace of God. I was before, if not a Blaſphemer, a Perſecutor, yet many ways *injurious*, to God, my Neighbour, and my ſelf; polluted, vile, a Sinner before the Lord exceedingly; I can't reflect upon my paſt Courſe, but I am ready to ſtand amaz'd at my own Guilt, and at the Grace that ſav'd me. I was born of Parents profeſſing the Chriſtian Religion, and who were, in ſome good Meaſure, exemplary therein; had from them much good Inſtruction, many ſeaſonable Admonitions; was brought up under the conſtant preaching of the Goſpel, heard many a uſeful, ſerious Sermon; particularly from Mr.——but all in vain, and to no purpoſe. I was often told of my Duty, put upon Prayer, reprov'd for my Faults, but without Effect. I ſtill harden'd my Neck, and continued in Folly. 'Tis my Unhappineſs and Loſs, that I have ſo imperfect a Memory of this dark, uncomfortable Scene of Life. I'm ſorry I did not ſooner, and more particularly record it. This I certainly know of it, that it was wholly made up of Vanity, Folly, and Sin; I liv'd without God in the World, caſting off Fear, and reſtraining Prayer. I remember particularly that I made no Conſcience of the horrid Sin of Lying; but was always ready to invent a Lye to diſguiſe a Fault. I was often guilty of the heinous Sin of——I remember, ſo little Reverence had I for Religion, notwithſtanding my Education, that I ſometimes laugh'd at a good Man, Mr. —— for his ſerious Prayers and Diſcourſe, and called it *Whining*. How juſtly might ſuch a profane Mouth have been ſtopp'd in the Duſt; ſuch a wicked Mind immediately plung'd in Hell!

I remember

I remember the extreme Danger I was in at ſuch a Time, when I was a Companion of Fools, and my Inclination led me to join my ſelf *to certain lewd Fellows of the baſer Sort.* I remember I was viſited with a Sickneſs, in which all my Friends deſpair'd of Life. This I was put in mind of afterwards, and of the Mercy of God in my Deliverance; but was ſo far from being affected with it, that I ridicul'd the kind and faithful Monitor. This, *and much worſe,* belongs to the Story of my paſt Life: And yet *I obtained Mercy*; it pleas'd God to ſtop me in my Courſe of Ignorance and Enmity; to open my Eyes, touch my Heart, and *call me by his Grace:* Shall I not ſay, have I not the utmoſt Reaſon to ſay, *the Grace of the Lord Jeſus was exceeding abundant! That in me he hath ſhewn forth all Long-ſuffering.* I had been in Hell, Lord, had not thy Mercy prevented, and *pluckt me as a Fire-brand out of the Burning.* How to eſtimate my Deliverance and thy Grace therein, I know not, much leſs to expreſs my Gratitude in ſuitable Strains. May thy Grace perfect what it has begun, bring me to Heaven; then I ſhall praiſe thee, and thither I refer the Work.

Of GRACE.

ACTS xxvi. 19. *I was not diſobedient unto the heavenly Viſion.*

Fourth Specimen.

THE Call of this great *Apoſtle,* which he here relates at large before *Agrippa,* and elſewhere acknowledges with ſo much Devotion; as 1 *Tim.* i. 13, *&c.* had in it ſomething extraordinary. As he was upon his Journey to *Damaſcus,* with

with a Commiſſion in his Hand for perſecuting the Church of Chriſt, he was ſtruck down to the Ground by a Light from Heaven; from whence he heard an awful Voice, that of the Lord Jeſus, whoſe Servants and Followers he was treating with ſo much Violence. The Voice attain'd the End for which it was ſent; was accompanied with ſo much Power and Authority, that it commanded his Attention, and reach'd his Conſcience. Nor does he reſiſt the divine Arm, now reveal'd; *he was not diſobedient to the heavenly Viſion*; but yields himſelf a willing Captive. *Lord!* ſays he, *what wilt thou have me to do?* Acts ix. 6. How ſovereign and victorious the Grace of God! Lord, that thou madeſt the Heart, has an immediate Acceſs to it; canſt open and ſubdue it with a Word. When thou wilt work, who ſhall lett? Thy Council ſhall ſtand, and thou wilt do all thy Pleaſure.

Nor was this a tranſient Conviction and Fit of Terror, but an effectual, divine Call, accompliſh'd with an high Hand, and attended with ſuch a ſurprizing Change in the *Apoſtle*, in the Temper of his Mind and Courſe of his Life; followed with ſuch Diſcoveries of God to him, that it brought its own Evidence along with it. Accordingly, we find he afterwards refers to it on all Occaſions, as a Thing out of Queſtion. *I obtained Mercy. He called me by his Grace.* He often relates the Circumſtances of it, as a known Hiſtory and Fact, of which he had as much Certainty, as of any other Incident of his Life, *Acts* xxii. 4,——17. And in the 26th Chapter he goes over the Story again, in all its Circumſtances, concluding, v. 19. *I was not diſobedient to the heavenly Viſion.* He kept the whole Scene in View, remembers, with no little Reſentment, his former, blind, wicked Zeal in perſecuting the Church of God, and the kind Surprize

prize of divine Grace towards him, and what Intercourſe he had with God thereupon. 'Tis not improbable, that while he was ſat *Damaſcus* three Days, without Sight, he had the Goſpel made known to him. Now it was that *it pleaſed God to reveal his Son in him*, as he takes Notice, *Galat.* i. 16. inſtruct and furniſh him for that glorious Miniſtry, he afterwards ſo well fulfill'd. He tells the *Galatians*, *that the Goſpel he preached, was not after Man*; that he *neither received it of Man*, nor *was taught it; but by the Revelation of Jeſus Chriſt*, Galat. i. 11, 12. referring, it may be, to this very Time, when he was a happy Captive at *Damaſcus*; lying under the Hand of God, and receiving his Illumination. Bleſſed School! infinitely preferable to that of *Gamaleel:* The Eyes of his Body were clos'd, but thoſe of the Mind opened. And here began the happy Period of his Chriſtian Life, that Courſe of eminent Services which he proſecuted, with a Zeal and Induſtry becoming ſuch a choſen Veſſel.

The Methods of divine Grace are exceeding different towards different Perſons. All good Men have not a Converſion and Call, as remarkable as that of the *Apoſtle*. Some are brought under the Government of Grace, and engag'd in Religion *gradually* and inſenſibly; which is the Caſe of many who have been trained up *in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord; have known the holy Scriptures from a Child;* have been diſciplin'd in the Houſes of faithful *Abraham's;* and have been followed with daily Admonitions and Charges to keep the Way of the Lord. The Religion of ſuch Perſons grows up with them: They have been reſtrain'd from groſs Enormities, and preſerv'd in ſome good *Decorum* and Order: Something was done in the Work of Grace at one time, by means of

of the Inſtruction of Parents, or the publick Miniſtry, and ſomething at another; but when and how the Work was accompliſh'd, and Chriſt formed in them, is hard to ſay: They themſelves frequently can't give an Account of it. But with reſpect to Sinners of greater Scandal and Infamy; who have liv'd long in a Courſe of wilful, open Diſobedience; in the total Neglect and Contempt of Religion, the Change is more evident and obvious; when the Grace of God finds them in ſuch a State, the Call of God manifeſts itſelf, and ordinarily will be known and obſerved. And I can't but reckon this Circumſtance to have ſome Advantage in it; not only as it gives a ſtronger Spring, and more Vigour to the Chriſtian's Motion afterwards, in the divine Life, and adds Oil to the Flame of his Zeal, as it did to the *Apoſtle*; but as it affords a ſatisfactory Proof of the Work itſelf, and frees the Mind from thoſe Suſpicions and Jealouſies, which are ſometimes the Exerciſe of young Converts, and of ſuch as were wrought upon in a more obſcure, leiſurely Way.

Bleſs the Lord, O my Soul! for his Grace, and for this additional Circumſtance of it; that thou haſt not only ſome good Evidence of thy Call, but haſt the Hiſtory of that glorious, and ſolemn Affair before thee, for thy frequent Peruſal. *God be thanked that I was* (though I was) *the Servant of Sin*; *I have obeyed from the Heart that Form of Doctrine which was delivered me.* God called me by his Grace; and though it was not by an audible Voice from Heaven, yet it was in ſo ſignal a Manner, and with ſuch Circumſtances of Conviction, Illumination, *&c.* as won't allow me to queſtion the Thing. The firſt Part of my Life for Eighteen (ſome may ſay Twenty, Thirty *&c.*) Years together was waſted, and loſt in Vanity and Folly.

I wander'd, with the Prodigal, from my Father's Houſe, caſting off his Government, deſpiſing his Protection, Care, and Bleſſing. And Wretch, as I was, would fain have filled my ſelf with *Huſks*, the Swine's Food, ſenſual Pleaſures. *I was loſt and dead*, Luke xv. 32. loſt and dead to all the Purpoſes of Life; the Life either of a Man, or a Chriſtian. I had no ſerious Thoughts of God, my Soul and Eternity. I can't ſay, that for the Space of——Years, I ever once in Earneſt put up one Petition to God. I eat and drank, lay down and roſe up, Day after Day, and Night after Night, without any Acknowledgment of my Preſerver and Benefactor; indeed God was not in all my Thoughts. I attended publick Worſhip among other People; but with no more Reverence of God, or Regard of what I was about, than if I had been a Statue or a Brute. I ſlept under Sermons: ſlept many of them away; and might as well have been always aſleep, for any Advantage I had, or propos'd to myſelf by them. My Attention was always looſe and unfixed, and often carried away to other Objects; and my Mind fill'd with the ſorrieſt Impertinences. I never bore any Part in publick Prayer; nor knew what it was to join therein: Sometimes I gaz'd at the Miniſter, and heard him pray in the ſame broken, dull manner I heard him preach; but never concurr'd, by forming in my Heart the Requeſts and Acknowledgments he offered up to God. And oh! how looſe, vain, and in many Inſtances downright backward, was my Life and Courſe? In ſhort, I had no Senſe or Reliſh of Religion, or any of the Things of it; but was a meer Maſs of Stupidity, Folly and Sin.

And thus I continued till I was—— Years of Age; when one Day hearing Mr.———preach from——my Mind was ſtrangely awakened: Methinks

thinks I ſee the Preacher ſtill, and hear his Voice; and I well remember ſome of his Words, and believe I ſhall never forget them as long as I live. I went home, fell upon my Knees, pray'd as well as I could, and wept in abundance —— After this I paſs'd through much Variety; had many Conflicts in my own Mind; ſometimes hoping, ſometimes fearing, and almoſt deſpairing. I retir'd from Company; pray'd often in my Manner; having but dark and confus'd Notions of Religion, notwithſtanding my Education, I found myſelf very much at a Loſs, and was aſſaulted with many, and dangerous Temptations. At laſt I apply'd myſelf to Mr.——who anſwered my Scruples; directed and encourag'd me in my Duty; lent me ſome good Books; pray'd with me, and made me an Offer of future Aſſiſtance: And I had frequent Converſation with him afterwards, which was of no ſmall Uſe to me. Still many Difficulties I found in my Way, and many Infirmities accompanied all I did: But I have Reaſon to think this was the Day of God's Grace and Power to my Soul; this the *Time of Life.* The Scales now fell off from my Eyes. I ſaw clearly the Folly, Danger, and Madneſs of my former Courſe. The Things of Religion had that Weight and Authority with me as never before. I was afraid of offending God, even to Scrupuloſity, in ſome Inſtances; was watchful over my Thoughts, Words and Actions. I durſt not let a Day paſs without Prayer; nor could I be eaſy, unleſs I found my Heart engag'd and affected therein; and had ſome Intercourſe with God; and often I prayed ſeveral times a Day. Sermons and good Books had quite another Savour with me than they us'd to have. The World appeard to me all Vanity and Emptineſs. I look'd upon the Things of it; the Scenes of Plea-

ſure, Mirth and Buſineſs, which were before my great Entertainment, with Shyneſs, Indifferency, and indeed with Contempt. I remember ſometimes when I awak'd in the Morning, my Mind was fill'd with awful Apprehenſions of Eternity; and as I was ready to pity the Men of the World, who have their Hearts ſo much immerſed in it; ſo it was with a ſort of Regret that I was obliged to bear any part among them: * And thus, thro' the rich Grace of God, I proceeded in my Courſe of Religion comfortably; though not without Impediments, Clouds, Temptations, and renewed

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* I have before hinted the Caſes of Chriſtians, and Methods of God's Grace towards them in their Converſion and Call, are exceeding various; often Afflictions of one kind or other; a near Proſpect of Death, in a ſharp Diſtemper; Diſappointments in the World, *&c.* are the Means of awakening careleſs Sinners, and bringing them to their Senſes. Sometimes a Sermon heard, a good Book read, a Text of Scripture ſet home with Power on the Heart, or an occaſional Admonition and Reproof. Any of theſe, all theſe God can, and frequently does bleſs and make effectual by his Grace, for the Converſion of Souls. But whatever be the Means or Manner of God's Call, I reckon Perſons who have long liv'd without Religion, are not brought to a Senſe of it, *they know not when or how*; are not enlighten'd in a Sleep or Dream, and of dead made alive; and yet they themſelves can give no Account of the Matter. I mention this not only as proper to employ the Devotion of ſerious Perſons, whoſe Experiences may agree with what I have been ſaying; and for an Admonition to ſuch as know nothing of it, but to bear Teſtimony, ſo far as it may go, to a Doctrine, that I'm afraid is growing out of Requeſt among us. I'm ſenſible to talk thus of the Grace of God in Converſion, and to put people upon enquiring into the Time and Circumſtances of their effectual Calling, is not the Strain in faſhion. But as I believe theſe are Points of great Reality, and much Importance to the Chriſtian Church, I deſire never to be aſhamed of them; and muſt own I ſhould be glad to ſee them reviv'd from the Pulpit and Preſs, eſpecially in the Hearts and Experiences of Chriſtians.

Fears *

Fears: But in the main I found myſelf ſtrengthened and ſettled; and like the *Æthiopian* Eunuch, went on my Way rejoicing.

Lord, what ſhall I render for all thy Benefits! For this Act of Grace; of great Grace, ſovereign, diſtinguiſhing Grace! I would never forget what thou haſt done for my Soul: Help me to take the Cup of Salvation and call on thy Name. I have indeed Reaſon to reflect on this as a Day of ſmall Things with me; to remember my great Weakneſſes: That *I ſpoke as a Child, thought as a Child, and acted as a Child* in Religion. Ador'd be the Hand that ſupported and conducted me through all. I have Reaſon to be much humbled that I was not more obedient to the heavenly Viſion; was not more ſtedfaſt, *and abounding in the Work of the Lord; that I did not preſs forward more towards the Mark: following after, that I might apprehend that for which I was apprehended of Chriſt Jeſus*; that after I had eſcaped the Pollutions of the World, *through the Knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*; I have been again ſo much intangled therein. Hereby my Evidences have been obſcur'd, Jealouſies and Fears encreaſed; Comforts and Uſefulneſs in the World obſtructed. Notwithſtanding I would hope the good Work is begun, and has not wholly fail'd. I remember the Beginning of it, when I felt in my Soul the ſharp Arrows of Conviction; and was laid at the Foot of Chriſt with a broken, bleeding, penitent Heart; *and he ſaid unto me live.* Surely I am not herein miſtaken. *I rejoice, O Lord, in thy Salvation*; ſtrengthen what thou haſt wrought for me; manifeſt and perfect thy own Work.

of GRACE.

1 COR. XV. 10. *And his Grace, which was beſtowed upon me, was not in vain.*

Fifth Specimen. THE Call of God, which the *Apoſtle* was favour'd with, had a great deal in it to manifeſt both the thing itſelf, and the Author; but the moſt authentick and ſatisfactory Evidence was from the Effects and Conſequences of it: He could ſay, *the Grace of God beſtowed on him was not in vain*; he comply'd and co-operated with it; purſuing the Duties of his new State. He was not diſobedient to the heavenly Viſion; did not hide his Talent in a Napkin, but labour'd, labour'd *abundantly*, and ſhew'd himſelf a good Steward of the manifold Grace of God. May I have the like Evidence of the like bleſſed Call; *ſhew my Faith by my Works*; prove the Call of Grace by a due Improvement of that Grace. Lord! teach me aſſiſt me herein; may not thy Grace be in vain towards me. Could I look back upon the moſt awful Scenes of Conviction, even a Voice from Heaven, ſtopping me in a Courſe of Sin, and engaging me in ſome Services of Religion; yet if afterwards I apoſtatis'd, ſuffer'd myſelf to be intangled in former Pollutions; return'd with *the Dog to his Vomit, and the Sow that was waſhed to her wallowing in the Mire*; grew ſecure and careleſs about my Soul and Eternity, and a Libertine in my Walk; I can't ſee my ſuppoſed Call could ſpeak for me, or afford me Comfort in ſuch a Caſe; or that any Awakenings I might have experienced, ought to paſs with me as a Proof of true Converſion. And on the other Hand, though I never

ver felt thoſe Terrors of the Lord ſome have, yet if I find myſelf under the conſtant Impreſſions of Religion, and Awe of God; find that I love him, fear him, am careful to pleaſe and obey him in all Things, I have no reaſon to queſtion my Religion, becauſe I was not brought to it in the ſame Way with ſome others.

God doth not tie himſelf up to one uniform Method in diſpenſing his Grace, and calling Sinners: And we muſt not think the Work is not done at all, becauſe not done in the Way we may be ready to mark out, *as God's Way*; as if he had but *one Way*. " I doubt (ſays a * grave Divine) it " hath occaſioned much unneceſſary Diſquietude " to ſome holy Perſons, that they have not found " ſuch a regular and orderly Tranſaction in their " Souls, as they have ſeen deſcribed in Books; " that they have not paſs'd thro' all thoſe Steps " and Stages of Converſion, which ſome (who " perhaps have felt them in themſelves) have too " peremptorily preſcribed unto others. God hath " ſeveral Ways of dealing with the Souls of Men, " and it ſufficeth if the Work be accompliſh'd, " whatever the Methods have been." He works all Things according to the Counſel of his own Will; works always with Wiſdom, and in the Manner that's beſt: He knows how to deal with every one, what Diſcipline is moſt proper for him, and what will moſt effectually anſwer the Deſign and Purpoſe of his Providence in the Call of this or that Perſon; and a Regard hereto directs to a different Manner of Working.

* Life of God in the Soul of Man, *p.* 61.

There is alſo no ſmall Difference in the Circumſtances divine Grace finds Perſons in, even in their natural State, which may make a Difference in God's Procedure with them. Though all are Sinners, all are not alike Sinners, alike tainted and defiled:

filed: Some inherit more vicious Inclinations than others, from their immediate Parents: Their bodily Conſtitutions, derived to them by their Birth, diſpoſe them more ſtrongly to ſeveral Sins; than the Conſtitution of others. Nor is it improbable that the Mind may receive both Advantages and Diſadvantages for Religion, from the Temper of Mind predominant in Parents; may I not add eſpecially of the Mother during the Pregnancy? There may be ſome happy Souls who inherit a great deal of *natural Virtue*, as I may call it: (though I'm far from excluding the Grace of God from all Influence therein): And theſe having the additional Help of a pious Education, and Example from their Childhood, are early ſeaſoned with Religion, and by the Grace of God gradually confirm'd in it.

Notwithſtanding there are few, whatever the Advantages of their Conſtitution and Education may be, but ſufficiently ſhew they need divine Grace to renew and change them. There's that Fooliſhneſs generally bound up in the Hearts of Children, and which early breaks forth in many woful Inſtances, as requires more than the Rod of human Correction to drive it away. Much more, no queſtion, might be done by Parents towards the Sanctification of their Children, were they vigilant and faithful; but as Things go in the World, we have but rare Inſtances of ſuch as eſcape the common Taint, and may be called *Righteous Perſons that need no Repentance*. And indeed how careful ſoever Parents may be, and ſeemingly ſucceſsful for a time, young Perſons, as they grow up, are too often carried away with the Examples of the World, and hurried on by Senſe and Appetite to many Follies, ſo that the firſt good Impreſſions wear off.

As to the Manner in which God proceeds with theſe Perſons, or with others, 'tis far from being fixed and invariable: And it becomes us not to limit his Grace herein, or preſcribe to his Wiſdom. 'Tis the Work of Grace I would enquire after, rather than the Mode of Operation. I am much more concern'd to know whether I am called than how or when: And indeed this is a Matter of ſuch high Importance, that I would not be eaſy without diſtinct and clear Evidence of it. 'Tis, I grant, a Miſtake to conclude none have Grace, that have not experienced ſuch or ſuch a Proceſs of ſpiritual Convictions; but 'tis a more dangerous Miſtake in Religion, to leave out the ſpecial regenerating Work of the holy Spirit; as if a religious Courſe might commence without his renewing Influence on the Heart, and a Principle of divine Life as the Foundation thereof. Certainly nothing but the Grace of God however, or whenever diſpens'd, is ſufficient to begin the Chriſtian's Motion towards Heaven. I can't underſtand, I muſt own, the Account a learned Man gives of this Matter in a practical Book; "That there is (ſays * he) a cer-
"tain Period of Time, at which every Man that is
"truly religious, began to be ſo; and from which
"the Beginning of his religious Life may truly
"be dated, is evident." What this Period is, he afterwards intimates: "In thoſe (ſays he) who have
"been educated from their Infancy in the Chriſ-
"tian Religion, the Period from whence their re-
"ligious Life ought to be dated is *Confirmation*;
"the Time from their Baptiſm being only their
"Preparation, or Time of Inſtruction." He adds indeed, "that for thoſe who have neglected this
"great and ſolemn Opportunity, or have ſince
"fallen into any great and wilful Sins, the only
"remaining Time from whence their religious Life

* Doctor *Clark*'s Eſſays on Baptiſm, *&c.* p. 40.

" can be reckoned is *Repentance*, that is, the Time
" ſince which they have ſo perfectly had the Con-
P. 43. " queſt over their Temptations, as not to have
" been ſeduced by them any more into any groſs or
" wilful Sin;" but the more ordinary and more ſta-
ted Period he makes *Confirmation*, or *Baptiſm*. " One
" Privilege, ſaith he, repreſented and conferr'd by
" Baptiſm, was the Influence and Aſſiſtance of
" God's Holy Spirit; adding, all Perſons that
" were baptiz'd, as their Bodies were waſhed and
" purify'd with Water, ſo their Minds were ſanc-
" tify'd by the Spirit of God: *But ye are waſh-*
" *ed; but ye are ſanctify'd; but ye are juſtify'd in*
" *the Name of our Lord Jeſus, and by the Spirit*
" *of our God*, 1 Cor. vi. 11. At their Baptiſm
" they received the Holy Ghoſt as a Gift con-
" ſtantly annexed to that holy Ordinance; and
" unleſs they quench'd and grieved it by their
" Sins, committed afterwards, it always continu-
" ed with them from thence forward, aſſiſting and
" enabling them to perform their Duty; ſtrength-
" ening and comforting them under Temptations
" and Afflictions, and *bearing Witneſs with their*
" *Spirit that they were the Children of God*, Rom.
" viii. 16." I doubt this will not hold true of all the Chriſtian Proſelytes, that received Baptiſm, even in the firſt, and extraordinary Age of Grace; particularly not of *Simon Magus*, who, we are told, believed, and was baptized, and yet continued in *the Gall of Bitterneſs, and Bond of Iniquity*, Acts viii. 13, 23. The ſame Author in his Preface, men-
P. 11. tions it " as a Reaſon why ſome Men have attri-
" buted the whole of Man's Converſion to ſuch
" an extraordinary and *uncertain* Grace of God, as
" has given Men Occaſion to ſit ſtill in their Sins,
" in Expectation of the Time, when this extraor-
" dinary Grace ſhould be pour'd down upon them;

becauſe

" becauſe (ſays he) they have fixed that Aſſiſtance " of God's Grace to an *uncertain* Period, which " God himſelf has conſtantly annexed to his Or- " dinances, and which he certainly beſtows on Men " at their Baptiſm, or at their ſolemn taking upon " themſelves the Profeſſion of Religion *(viz.)* in " *Confirmation.*"

Surely this is not ſpoken with that Caution and Judgment as might have been expected. I know not what Proof can be made, that God has certainly annexed his Grace to the Ordinance of *Baptiſm*, or *Confirmation*; and that the great and divine Work the Scripture ſpeaks ſo much of, under the Notion of Repentance, Regeneration, being transform'd by the renewing of our Minds, *&c.* is at that time *conſtantly* perform'd. I'm afraid, if Confirmation find Perſons deſtitute of Grace, it often leaves them ſo; even tho' it was adminiſter'd with all the Solemnity the Doctor wiſhes for; and I can't but ſuſpect the directing Perſons to this, as the *Period* from whence a new and divine Life begins, tends to deceive them, tempting them to take up with a Formality, or at beſt a Sign of divine Grace inſtead of the Thing it ſelf. In the mean time I chearfully agree with what's here aſſerted, *that there is a certain Period from whence a religious Life takes its Date*, tho' I can't agree that 'tis the Time of Baptiſm, Confirmation, nor indeed Admiſſion to the Lord's Table, but more at *large the time of Converſion*, when it pleaſes God to call by his Grace.

'Tis granted this Work is accompliſh'd in a very different Manner; ſometimes *inſtantaneouſly* and ſuddenly, and with ſuch remarkable Circumſtances, that it becomes a known and certain thing to thoſe concern'd in it, and it may be, in ſome Meaſure, to others; as in the Inſtances of the Apoſtle *Paul*, the Jaylor, and of *Lydia*, Acts xvi. 14. *The Lord open'd*

open'd her Heart, that ſhe attended to the things ſpoken of Paul. While ſhe was hearing, the Spirit of God touch'd her Conſcience; the Effect of which was her immediate embracing the Doctrine of the Goſpel propos'd to her. But often the Work is brought about in a way more ſecret and leſs perceptible: Nor is the Chriſtian ſo much concerned to examine into the Method of divine Grace in his Call and Change, as into the Thing itſelf. The main Points I would contend for are, that 'tis a divine Work, the Finger of God, owing to the ſpecial Operation of his Spirit, and that this, and this alone, is the Beginning of a divine Life. I reckon this well expreſs'd by the Author referr'd to before, "Religion in the Souls of Men, ſays he, is the immediate Work of God, and all our natural Endeavours "can neither produce it alone, nor merit thoſe ſupernatural Aids, by which it muſt be wrought. "The Holy Ghoſt muſt come upon us, and the "Power of the Higheſt muſt overſhadow us, before that holy Thing can be begotten, and Chriſt "be formed in us." It follows in the ſame Book, *p.* 104. "That there is a new Birth, and an inward divine Operation of the holy Spirit of "God, which doth conſtantly exert it ſelf in the "Souls of the adopted Sons of God, but chiefly "in their Regeneration, is a Truth ſo ſacred and "certain, that none who have any Acquaintance "with the inward Ways of God can ſo much as "queſtion it. This is moſt irreligiouſly reſtrained "to the extraordinary Effuſion of the Holy Ghoſt "on the Day of *Pentecoſt*, or to the other miraculous Gifts of the Spirit, in thoſe Beginnings of "Chriſtianity; contrary both to the Promiſes of "the *Old Teſtament*, and the whole Current of the "*New*." And having taken notice of ineffectual Convictions in ſome Men, he ſubjoins, "But when "the

Life of God in the Soul of Man, *p.* 58.

" the Spirit of God is pour'd out upon them,
" then there are preſented to their Underſtand-
" ings more lively, ſtrong, conſtant and invigo-
" rated Impreſſions, which do not only gain Be-
" lief, but obtrude themſelves ſo often, and with
" that Energy upon the Mind of the converted
" Man, that he is divinely overcome, and yet with-
" out the leaſt Force on his Reaſon and Will; he
" ſeeing the greateſt Reaſon in the World for what
" is propos'd, and chuſing with the freeſt Liber-
" ty; ſo that the renewed Man becomes in all
" things another manner of Perſon than he was for-
" merly."

In ſhort, 'tis God that works in us that which is well-pleaſing in his Sight: He opens every Heart as well as that of *Lydia*'s, that is duly attentive to the great Things of Religion; he begins a good Work in us; and 'tis from his working that our Courſe of Religion begins. This is the Period and Date of the divine Life, from hence the Chriſtian ſets out in his Race: And tho' we are not to ſit ſtill, but expect his Grace in the uſe of all appointed Means, and faithful Endeavours, according to the Powers and Capacities God has given us; yet we muſt wait for his Grace as that which crowns our Endeavours, and makes them effectual: *Work out your Salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you to will and to do of his own good pleaſure*, Phil. ii. 12, 13. There is an Harmony between God's Grace and our Endeavours; the one doth not render the other unneceſſary; but both muſt concur to make the Chriſtian, and indeed in all the Atchievements and Performances of the Chriſtian Life.

Inquire, O my Soul! into this important Matter; upon what Principles doſt thou act in Religion? Upon what Foundation doſt thou ſtand?

Thou art baptiz'd; may'ſt have received Confirmation, as 'tis among the Miniſtries of Men; may'ſt have profeſs'd thy Faith in Chriſt, and Obedience to him; ſealed his Covenant at his Table; all this thou may'ſt do, and yet the main Thing, the Source and Supply of all vital Religion be wanting *(viz.) the Illumination and Unction of the holy Spirit*, the Call of Grace: Bleſſed be God for any Evidence I have of this; that I have any Reaſon to hope Grace has been beſtow'd upon me, and that his Grace has not been altogether in vain; has not been a dead inactive Principle, but a Spring of divine Motion, of ſpiritual Affections and Operations. Alas! that it has been no more ſo; that I have ſo much neglected the Gift of God in me; hid and buried the nobleſt Talent; quench'd and grieved the Holy Ghoſt. Have Mercy on me, O my God, according to thy Loving-kindneſs; according to the Multitude of thy tender Mercies blot out my Tranſgreſſions, forgive my Defects, heal my Backſlidings, ſtrengthen the Things that remain, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me.

Of GRACE.

1 COR. XV. 10. *And his Grace beſtowed upon me was not in vain, but I labour'd more abundantly.*—

Specimen. Sixth.

DID Converſion import no more than a Proſelytiſm to the Chriſtian Faith, as many ſeem to think; did Regeneration and the new Creature include no more, than what is done for us in Baptiſm; as the learned Dr. intimated to his Auditory, when in a Diſcourſe on that Subject he pointed to the Font and told them, *There they were all regene-*

regenerated; was this ſo I ſhould have no occaſion to inquire into the matter: But certainly there's a Converſion from Sin, from the Love of the World; from a carnal ſenſual Courſe, as well as from Paganiſm, Judaiſm, *&c.* and the one is as neceſſary for many Chriſtians, as the other for downright Infidels: *He is not a Jew who is one outwardly; nor is that Circumciſion, which is outward in the Fleſh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and Circumciſion is that of the Heart, in the Spirit, and not in the Letter, whoſe praiſe is not of Men but of God,* Rom. ii. 28, 29. Nor is he a Chriſtian that is baptiz'd, has learnt his Creed; who has a Form of Knowledge, and of Truth in the Law; but he is a Chriſtian, and he only, who has the Principles and Heart of a Chriſtian. *If any Man be in Chriſt he is a new Creature,* 2 Cor. v. 7. And *if any Man have not the Spirit of Chriſt he is none of his,* Rom. viii. 9. Examine therefore, O my Soul! into the Grounds of thy Profeſſion and Hope, and don't flatter thy ſelf with a weak Opinion that thou art a Chriſtian, becauſe thou art called ſo, and weareſt the common Chriſtian Badge. The Apoſtle had a Clearneſs in this Matter above what moſt can pretend to: The Tranſactions of Grace towards him; the Influence of God's Spirit upon his Mind in the Beginning and Progreſs of a divine Work, was ſo diſtinct, clear, and ſelf-evident, that he could ſpeak of it and relate it without Heſitation: He knew God had called him by his Grace; well knew *when* and *how*; But after all the fulleſt Conviction, the moſt ſatisfying Proof of the Truth of his Call, was the happy Effects of it; that the Grace of God was not in vain towards him: It was ſhewn him at his firſt Converſion, how *great Things* he was to *ſuffer* for the Name of *Chriſt*, *Acts* ix. 16. what Difficulties he muſt expect to meet with in the Diſcharge of his

his Office; what Hatred, Reproach, and Perils of every ſort; but none of theſe Things mov'd him, neither counted he his Life dear, ſo he might finiſh his Courſe with Joy, *Acts* xx. 24. In ſhort, the Vigour of his Love and Zeal were in ſome meaſure, anſwerable to the Riches of divine Grace towards him: Never was Man more diſtinguiſh'd by the Grace of God, and, it may be, never did any more honour and improve it? *His Grace beſtow'd on me was not in vain.*

Lord may I have the like authentick Evidence of my Call! may I be able this way to make good my Pretenſions to thy Grace; 'tis comfortable when Perſons can look back upon clear diſtinct Circumſtances of a divine Work, and recite the Hiſtory of Grace in their Converſion. With how much Levity and Deſpite ſoever ſome may treat ſuch a Subject, it is of account with many wiſer Perſons, and affords them glorious Entertainment. However, I would not lay the main Streſs here, and make this the *only*, or indeed the *chief* Evidence of my Chriſtianity. The Work of God upon the Hearts of Men is myſterious and intricate; 'tis common to miſtake it, eaſy to counterfeit it: Some take Conviction for Converſion, occaſional Heats in Religion, ſhort Flights of Devotion, or a fit of Melancholy, in which ſomething of Religion intermixes, for a Work of Grace; and being perſuaded that ſuch a Work was begun in their Souls, and thence drawing Inferences, that *once in Chriſt, always in Chriſt*, &c. they argue themſelves into a Confidence concerning their good State: tho' they have never *brought forth Fruits meet for Repentance:* And this ſuppos'd imaginary Work they often refer to afterwards, and reſt in, as the Foundation of their Hope and Comfort, whatever Reaſon they have to queſtion it; tho' all their Goodneſs was as a Morning

ing Cloud, and as the early Dew that ſoon goeth away. O may I not fall under ſuch Deluſions! The Grace of God is not a tranſient Work, but a permanent Principle; *the Tree is known by its Fruits:* A good Tree cannot bring forth corrupt Fruit, nor will it be barren and altogether without Fruit. I have no ſufficient Evidence to conclude I have received the Grace of God, unleſs I can ſay *it has not been in vain.* Search, O my Soul! into this matter: Has the Grace of God, thou art pleaſing thy ſelf with the thoughts of, perform'd its part in thee, accompliſh'd what 'tis deſign'd and given for, ſet up a Throne in thy Heart, and ſhewn it ſelf in a ſteady Courſe of ſolid Religion and Piety? That I may be the better able to make a Judgment of my State, I ſhall here take a ſhort View of a true Convert; one who has been created in Chriſt Jeſus to good Works; one who *has not received the Grace of God in vain*; but who has liv'd and acted under the Conduct, Impreſſion and Influence thereof; in which I ſhall give a ſort of an Hiſtory of Grace; the Effects of it in the Life of a Chriſtian, from the beginning to the end of his Courſe.

1. The firſt Effort of Grace in the Soul, is ordinarily towards God, and in a way of Devotion; no ſooner are the Eyes opened, but they are darted towards Heaven; the Chriſtian's firſt ſolicitude is about himſelf; an eſcape out of the Danger he ſees himſelf in; a Deliverance from the Wrath of God and a future Hell: the obtaining the Forgiveneſs of his Sins, *&c.* Theſe are the great Things that fill his Mind at this Time, eſpecially if he has paſs'd through a State of Bondage and Terror: Accordingly Prayer he finds his moſt proper Relief. 'Tis remark'd of the Apoſtle immediately upon his Converſion, *that he pray'd,* Acts ix. 11. Which ſeems mentioned as an Evidence, and Indeed a firſt Eſſay of

of Grace; generally Religion begins here. The new Creature breaths in Prayer, the Subject and Matter of which is various, and manag'd with different Skill, Enlargement and Succeſs, according to the different States and Circumſtances of Perſons; I may add, and different Degrees of the divine Action. For the moſt part there's a great deal of penitent Confeſſion, Self-abaſement and Abhorrence, Indignation, Fear and vehement Deſire, and ſometimes *ſtrong Crying and Tears:* And as the Chriſtian ſets out in this manner, he remains a conſtant ſupplicant, waiting before the Throne of Grace through the whole of his Life: Nor does he confine himſelf to this ſingle Duty, but is buſy in other parts of Worſhip: Thus it is ſaid of thoſe early Converts, *Acts* ii. 42. *That they continu'd in the Apoſtles Doctrine, and Fellowſhip, and in breaking of Bread and Prayers:* When the Grace of God brings any into the Church, they are thenceforth imploy'd in the Services thereof.

2. The moſt genuine and conſtant Effect, is the divine Nature communicated: the Image of God drawn in the Soul; conſiſting in the ſeveral Graces that adorn the Chriſtian's Heart and Converſation. Theſe make up the divine Life, "the Root of which, ſays an excellent Perſon, is Faith; the chief Branches are Love to God, Charity to Man, Purity and Humility. Faith has the ſame Place in the divine Life, which Senſe hath in the natural; being indeed nothing elſe but a kind of Senſe, and feeling Perſuaſion of ſpiritual Things: It extends it ſelf unto all divine Truths; but in our lapſed Eſtate, it hath a peculiar Relation to the Declaration of God's Mercy and Reconcileableneſs to Sinners thro' a Mediator; and therefore receiving its Denomination from that principal Object, is ordinarily termed *Faith in Jeſus Chriſt.*

Life of God in the Soul of Man, *p.* 15.

"The

" The Love of God is a delightful and affectionate " Senſe of the divine Perfections, which makes the " Soul reſign, and ſacrifice it ſelf wholly unto " him; deſiring above all Things to pleaſe him; " and delighting in nothing ſo much as in Fellow- " ſhip and Communion with him; and being rea- " dy to do and ſuffer any Thing for his Sake, or at " his Pleaſure: Though this Affection may have " its firſt Riſe from the Favours and Mercies of " God towards our ſelves, yet doth it, in its Growth " and Progreſs, tranſcend ſuch particular Conſide- " rations, and ground it ſelf on his infinite Good- " neſs, manifeſted in all the Works of Creation, and " Providence. A Soul thus poſſeſs'd with divine " Love, muſt needs be inlarg'd towards all Man- " kind, in a ſincere and unbounded Affection; be- " cauſe of the Relation they have to God, being his " Creatures, and having ſomething of his Image " ſtamp'd upon them. And this is that Charity I " named as the ſecond Branch of Religion, and un- " der which all the Parts of Juſtice, and all the " Duties we owe to our Neighbour are eminently " comprehended: For he who doth truly love all " the World, will be nearly concern'd in the In- " tereſt of every one, and ſo far from wronging, or " injuring any Perſon, that he will reſent any Evil " befalls others, as if it happened to himſelf.

" By Purity I underſtand a due Abſtractedneſs " from the Body, and Maſtery over the inferior Ap- " petites; or ſuch a Temper and Diſpoſition of " Mind, as makes a Man deſpiſe and abſtain from " all Pleaſures and Delights of Senſe or Fancy, " which are ſinful in themſelves, or tend to extin- " guiſh or leſſen our Reliſh of more divine and in- " tellectual Pleaſures; which doth alſo infer a reſo- " luteneſs to undergo all thoſe Hardſhips he may " meet with in the Performance of his Duty; ſo

" that not only Chaſtity and Temperance, but alſo " Chriſtian Courage and Magnanimity may come " under this Head. Humility imports a deep Senſe " of our own Meanneſs, with a hearty and affecti- " onate Acknowledgment of our owing all that we " are to the divine Bounty; which is always ac- " companied with a profound Submiſſion to the " Will of God, and great Deadneſs toward the glo- " ry of the World, and Applauſe of Men. Theſe " are the higheſt Perfections that either Men or " Angels are capable of; the very Foundation of " Heaven laid in the Soul; and he who hath attain- " ed them, needs not deſire to pry into the hid- " den Rolls of God's Decrees, or ſearch the Vo- " lumes of Heaven to know what's determined a- " bout his everlaſting Condition; but he may find " a Copy of God's Thoughts concerning him writ- " ten in his own Breaſt: His Love to God may " give him Aſſurance of God's Favour to him; and " thoſe Beginnings of Happineſs which he feels in " the Conformity of the Powers of his Soul to the " Nature of God, and Compliance with his Will, " are a ſure Pledge that his Felicity ſhall be perfected " and continued to all Eternity: And it is not with- " out Reaſon that one ſaid, *I had rather ſee the real* " *Impreſſions of a God-like Nature upon my own Soul,* " *than have a Viſion from Heaven, or an Angel ſent to* " *tell me, that my Name were enroll'd in the Book of* " *Life.*"

Theſe Graces, which might be more largely explain'd, and to which many other Particulars might be added, are the moſt infallible Evidence of a divine Work, and indeed the genuine Iſſues of it. 'Tis as fit to call that a Man, which has no Soul, no rational Faculties, as him a Chriſtian that is deſtitute of the Graces of the Spirit; not that the Convert *immediately* and on a ſudden, finds them all

in himself, and all in their Strength, Lustre and Vigour. They are the product ordinarily of much time and experience; the new Creature, or Creature of Grace is first an Embryo, as I may say, as well as the natural Creature, and all the Members of it in *Continuance* are fashioned, when as yet there were none of them. That glorious Piece, the divine Image, is not brought to Perfection all at once, but receives many additional Touches and gradual Refinement; the Christian sitting time after time under the Hand of the divine Spirit; nor is the finishing Stroke given till we leave the Body. I bless thee, O my God! for what I have experienc'd of this great and glorious Work, and the happy Fruits thereof; for what thou hast performed in me, and for me; for the washing of Regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost; for the more imperfect Draught of thy Image. Lord! carry on what thou hast begun, fulfill the Work of Faith in me, of Love and of every other Grace with Power.

3dly, The Grace of God is a sovereign Preservative against Sin: arms and strengthens the Soul against it, and gives a Conquest over it; *whosoever is born of God*, says the Apostle, *does not commit Sin, for his Seed remaineth in him, and he cannot Sin, because he is born of God*, 1 John iii. 9. And again, Chap. v. 18. *We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not, but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.* And to the same purpose, *Gal.* v. 24. *They that are Christ's have crucified the Flesh, with the Affections and Lusts.* 'Tis not said they *shall*, but they *have* crucified them, have done it already, in some measure. The Seed of God, the first original Principle, is planted in the Soul to defend it against the defilements of Sin; and indeed all the Graces, as Branches from

that Root, are ſo many Guards of the Heart; as *Fear*, Nehe. v. 15. *Love*, 1 John v. 3. *Hope*, 1 John iii. 3, *&c.* Lord, may I find the Power and Efficacy of thy Grace herein; find it a prevailing Principle of Mortification; of Victory over the World, and the Luſts thereof; diſpoſing and enabling me to cleanſe my ſelf from all Filthineſs both of Fleſh and Spirit: Surely if I be born of God and reſemble him, as I ſhall love what he loveth, ſo I ſhall hate the abominable thing his Soul hateth.

4thly, Divine Grace manifeſts it ſelf in a conſtant vigorous Oppoſition to the Remainders of Sin. The beſt of Chriſtians, in this Life, have *Sin dwelling in them*; are compaſſed about with Infirmities and Frailties; which Grace ſtruggles with and gradually ſubdues. Every Nature has its Antipathies, and will bend its Force againſt ſuch things as are deſtructive and hurtful to it. Thus 'tis with the new Nature; and as there is nothing more contrary to it, more deſtructive of its Intereſts and Comforts than Sin, it cannot but oppoſe it; and hence there's an inward warfare and conteſt in the Soul of a renewed Man; *The Fleſh luſting againſt the Spirit, and the Spirit againſt the Fleſh.* This, I think, the Apoſtle repreſents *Rom.* vii. Nor can I apprehend any Injury done to him, or Religion, by ſuch an Interpretation: Thoſe that object and inſiſt that the Apoſtle is not here ſpeaking of himſelf, but in the Perſon of a carnal *Jew*, under the ineffectual Teaching and Reſtraint of the Law, and Reproof of his own Conſcience, do not, it may be, enough conſider, that it is not any Sort of *groſs* Sins the Apoſtle is complaining of the Prevalency of; nor of a willing allowed Subjection to *any Sin*; but of ſuch Infirmities, as were againſt the Purpoſe, Reſolution and Bent of his Mind; and if any Expreſſions be thought too ſtrong, we may underſtand them as the

the Language of Humility; inſtances of which we have elſewhere: As when he calls himſelf *the chief of Sinners*, 1 Tim. i. 15. *Leſs than the leaſt of all the Saints*, Eph. iii. 8. He was far from *ſerving the Law of Sin*, by a deliberate free Conſent thereto; or being *ſold under Sin*, as that notes his yielding himſelf a willing Captive. Sin was dethron'd in his Soul; was no longer *King and Lord* there, tho' it ſometimes play'd the *Tyrant:* His Heart, his Will, which is the Man, was againſt it; and therefore he could ſay, *'tis not I, but Sin that dwelleth in me*, ver. 17. He aim'd at a more abſolute Purity than he could attain to, and ſo often falling ſhort, he bewail'd his Caſe, and expreſſes himſelf with this Reſentment; in which I can ſee nothing inconſiſtent with what he ſays in the foregoing Chapter, or in any other Part of the *New Teſtament*. Chriſtians of greater Refinement and better Taſte in Religion, will cenſure themſelves with much Severity, for ſuch Infirmities as eſcape the Obſervation of others. The Want of a Frame for the Solemnities of God's Houſe, Worſhip and Day; neglecting or miſmanaging a Duty; the Sallies of Pride, Vanity, Envy, *&c.* will occaſion deeper Humblings, greater Self-reproach and Abhorrence, than others find upon the Commiſſion of very groſs Sins; and no Wonder that Perſons of this Make and Temper complain of a Law in their Members; of Captivity, Slavery, Bondage, and are ready to cry out, *O wretched Men, who ſhall deliver us!* An irregular Motion in the Mind, diſorderly Affections, Deſires, Paſſions, *&c.* Want of Love to God, Delight in him, Chearfulneſs, Life and Vigour in his Service, are with them *great* Sins; and as they are ſuch Infirmities as theſe I ſuppoſe the Apoſtle here refers to, and not Drunkenneſs, Adultery, Sodomy, Murder, and the like Infamies; I can't ſee why he may not ſpeak of himſelf in the

Strain he does; not thereby repreſenting himſelf, or any other good Man as living in fleſhly Luſts, but as groaning under a Senſe of preſent Imperfections, and waiting for a Deliverance: But after all, I don't think it worth while to contend for this Conſtruction; the thing it ſelf is certain, whether it be found in this Place of Scripture or not; there's an inward Struggle, in good Men, of Grace againſt Corruption; and I reckon it a Mark of Grace, and an Evidence that it is not in vain towards us, when we have a due Senſe and Reſentment of remaining Infirmities, and are in the proper Uſe of Means ſtriving for Maſtery.

5thly, Divine Grace in the Soul is a Principle of univerſal Obedience, and zealous Service in Religion: As the Goſpel, that Declaration and Inſtrument of Grace, teaches *to deny ungodlineſs and worldly Luſts, and to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent World*, Tit. ii. 12. Much more does Grace it ſelf, as an inward vital Principle, do ſo. The Apoſtle whilſt under the Impreſſion, and it may be preparatory Diſcipline of Grace, cries out, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* Acts ix. 6. His Mind was brought into a State of Subjection, and his whole after Conduct ſhew'd his Loyalty to his great Maſter: *For me to live*, ſays he, *is Chriſt*, Phil. i 21. No Pains, Self-denial, and Diligence he thought too much to promote the Honour of God, and ſerve the Intereſt of his Church: We *being affectionately deſirous of you*, ſays he to the *Theſſalonians*, were *willing to have imparted unto you not the Goſpel of God only, but alſo our own Souls, becauſe ye were dear unto us*, 1 Theſſ. ii. 8. *He laboured more abundantly*; and with what a noble generous Zeal did he go through his Labours, and bear even the Diſappointment of them? *I will very gladly ſpend and be ſpent for you, tho' the more abundantly I love you,*

you, the leſs I be loved, 2 Cor. xii. 15. The Grace of God has the like Effect in all the Faithful. Indeed at firſt the Zeal of young Converts is generally more confin'd to their own Concerns, ſpiritual Concerns; but as they grow in Grace their Zeal is more extended, and employ'd about thoſe Duties that reſpect the Rights, Intereſts, and Services of Mankind, and eſpecially the Church of God. *We know that we are paſſed from Death unto Life, becauſe we love the Brethren,* 1 John iii. 14. *Peter* was directed to ſhew his Love to Chriſt, by his Care of his Church, *John* xxi. 15. And the more abundant Labour the *Apoſtle* ſpeaks of, as an Argument *that the Grace of God beſtow'd on* him *was not in vain,* was chiefly in the Service of the Church. Lord, may I have this Evidence of thy Grace! may it be a Source of Catholick Obedience, and Catholick Love! May *I have Reſpect unto all thy Commands, and then ſhall I not be aſhamed,* Pſal. cxix. 6. *Turning unto thee with all my Heart, with all my Soul, and with all my Might, according to all thy Law,* 2 Kings xxiii. 25. Walking in all thy Ordinances, and in the whole Compaſs of my Duty blameleſs. Help me to converſe not only with thyſelf, but with my Fellow-Creatures, according to the Rules of thy Word; loving God with all my Heart, Soul, and Mind, and my Neighbour as myſelf; doing Good to all Men, as I have Opportunity, eſpecially *unto them who are of the Houſhold of Faith*; praying for the Peace of *Jeruſalem*, preferring it to my chiefeſt Joy, and ſeeking its Good always.

6thly, 'Tis among the Effects of the Grace of God, that it ſo moulds, transforms, and frames the Heart for Religion, that the Work of it becomes *natural, free and eaſy. The Chriſtian,* at firſt, finds more Difficulty in his Way; more Reluctance and

Backwardneſs to his Duty; but as Grace prevails, this is by Degrees overcome, his Heart is enlarged, and he runs the Ways of God's Commandments with Alacrity and Chearfulneſs." "Religion (ſays one * *Dighton*) is an inward, free, ſelf-moving Principle; and thoſe who have made Progreſs in it are not acted only by external Motives, driven merely by Threatnings, nor bribed by Promiſes, nor conſtrained by Laws; but are powerfully inclin'd to that which is Good, and delight in the Performance of it. The Love which a pious Man bears to God and Goodneſs, is not ſo much by Virtue of a Command enjoining him ſo to do, as by a new Nature inſtructing and prompting him to it. Nor does he pay his Devotions as an unavoidable Tribute, only to appeaſe the divine Juſtice, or quiet his clamorous Conſcience; but thoſe religious Exerciſes are the proper Emanations of the divine Life, the natural Employments of the new born Soul: He prays, and gives Thanks, and repents, not only becauſe theſe Things are commanded, but rather becauſe he is ſenſible of his Wants, and of the divine Goodneſs, and of the Folly and Miſery of a ſinful Life: His Charity is not forced, nor his Alms extorted from him; his Love makes him willing to give; and though there were no outward Obligation, *his Heart would deviſe liberal Things.* Injuſtice, or Intemperance, and all other Vices are as contrary to his Temper and Conſtitution, as the baſeſt Actions are to the moſt generous Spirit, and Impudence and Scurrility to thoſe who are naturally modeſt. In a Word, what our bleſſed Saviour ſaid of himſelf, is in ſome Meaſure applicable to his Followers, *that it's their Meat and Drink to do their Father's Will,* John iv. 34. Thoſe

" Exerciſes

* Life of God in the Soul of Man, *p.* 58.

" Exerciſes of Religion, which to others are in-
" ſipid and tedious, do yield the higheſt Pleaſure, *P.*
" and Delight to them: They rejoice when they
" are called to go up to the Houſe of the Lord;
" that they may *ſee* his *Power* and his *Glory as*
" they *have* formerly *ſeen* it *in* his *Sanctuary*, Pſal.
" lxiii. 2. They never think themſelves ſo hap-
" py, as when having retir'd from the World,
" and having got free from the Noiſe and Hurry
" of Affairs, and ſilenc'd all their clamorous Paſ-
" ſions (thoſe troubleſome Gueſts within) they
" place themſelves in the Preſence of God, and en-
" tertain Fellowſhip and Communion with him.
" They delight to adore his Perfections, and re-
" count his Favours, and to proteſt their Affec-
" tion to him, and tell him a thouſand times that
" they love him; to lay out their Troubles and
" Wants before him, and diſburthen their Hearts
" in his Boſom." Religion is not only their Work, but their Element in ſome Meaſure; not but they may ſometimes have their dark Hours and dull Frames, but ordinarily Religion is agreeable to them; a *Day in God's Court is better than a thouſand:* They have many Hours of Comfort and Joy upon their Knees, and of Triumph at the Lord's Table. Lord, may I experience more of the Power of thy Grace in this Inſtance; I ſhall then be aſſur'd 'tis not in vain. May I be thus transform'd, more and more transform'd, by the renewing of my Mind; may Religion become my Delight, my very Life and Nature; my conſtant Entertainment and Joy.

7thly, The Grace of God, when 'tis not in vain, but has free Scope in the Soul, carries it forward through all the Stages of the divine Life, refining, purifying, and advancing it ſtill higher and higher therein. *The Path of the Juſt is as the ſhining Light,*

that ſhineth more and more unto the perfect Day. As the riſing Sun increaſes til it comes to its Meridian Strength and Brightneſs, ſo it ſhould be with the Chriſtian, and would be, did he not check and reſtrain the divine Principle, and quench the divine Spirit. Oh! may I hold on my Way, wax ſtronger and ſtronger; and like him that *ſat on the white Horſe, go forth conquering, and to conquer*, Rev. vi. 2.

8thly, 'Tis of an humbling Nature; notwithſtanding all its great Atchievements, its Victories and Triumphs, it lays the Soul low, and keeps it in a State of Abaſement, and often of Self-Annihilation. The *Apoſtle* labour'd more abundantly than they all, and was every way a Perſon of diſtinguiſh'd Excellency; and yet, how doth he ſhrink and contract himſelf? *I am nothing*, 2 Cor. xii. 11. *Leſs than the leaſt of all Saints*, Eph. 3. 8. *Forgetting the Things which are behind, he preſs'd towards the Mark*, Phil. iii. 13, 14. Paſt Attainments he made little Account of, and was ready to overlook them as nothing.

Nilq; putans actum dum quid ſupereſſet agendum.

And hence I ſuppoſe that humbling Strain, *Rom.* vii. which ſo many think can't be underſtood of the *Apoſtle* himſelf. It would not, I believe, have been his Language, when a *Phariſee*, and when touching the Righteouſneſs of the Law he was blameleſs: but that Grace, which had ſo glorioufly diſtinguiſh'd and enrich'd him, had emptied him alſo: The beſt Chriſtians are often leaſt in their own Eyes. *I am carnal*, ſays he, though he had a moſt devout Heart; a moſt divine, heavenly, and ſpiritual Frame. Lord! whilſt I contemplate thy Grace, and praiſe thee for the Ornaments thou haſt put upon me; may I have a conſtant Senſe of my own Imperfections, and be vile, and nothing in my own Eyes.

9thly, I

9thly, I can't but reckon it among the Properties of divine Grace, when duly cheriſhed and improv'd, and not in vain, that it raiſes the Mind above this World, and fixes the Eye upon another, 2 *Cor.* iv. *ult.* Grace is of an aſpiring Nature, and moves with a conſtant Tendency towards Heaven; and as it has the World in its Way, it triumphs over it: It not only maintains a Warfare againſt it, in all the Forms in which it appears, tempting, deluding, in grieving and enſnaring, but overcomes it, ſtrips it of its Charms, and throws it under Foot. The Chriſtian under the Power, Influence, and Prevalency of the Grace of God, is in ſome Meaſure *crucified to the World, and the World to him*, Gal. vi. 14. His Heart is in Heaven; his Affections withdrawn from this Earth, ſo that he often looks down upon it with a pious Shyneſs; and paſſes through its various Scenes of Vanity and Trial with a great deal of Indifferency; *weeping, as though he wept not; and rejoicing, as tho' he rejoiced not*, 1 Cor. vii. 30. This was the *Apoſtle*'s happy Temper and Frame; he could ſay, *None of theſe Things move me, neither count I my Life dear, ſo I may finiſh my Courſe with Joy*, Acts xx. 24. The Affairs of Religion, and of another World, appear'd ſo great and important; did ſo poſſeſs his Mind and fill his Faculties, that this World was almoſt quite out of Sight with him: He would ſcarce vouchſafe a Glance towards it! And I can't but obſerve with what an Emphaſis of Affection he ſpeaks of the Day of Retribution, often calling it, *that Day*, 1 Tim. iv. 8. 2 Tim. i. 12, 18. The Day is not deſcrib'd, nor mentioned before; the Antecedent was in his own Mind; *that Day*, viz. *that great and glorious Day his Heart and Thoughts run ſo much upon:* The Day of his Hopes and Happineſs; which he had a conſtant Reference to, for Support and Comfort

Comfort in his Tribulations, and Excitement in his Duties and Labours; and in Compariſon of which every other Day, and the Occurrences thereof were but Dreams and Vanity. Alas! that I know no more of the Power and Efficacy of divine Grace herein; that my Affections are no more carried out after the Things of a future World, and my Mind no more filled with the Proſpect of *that Day*, and the Glories of it! that I can't attain to a greater Indifferency about every State of preſent Things, but have given Way to little Tranſports, Ruffle or Diſcompoſure, upon ſo ſlight an Occaſion as a Change, any Change, in that Faſhion and Scheme of Things that lies on this Side Eternity, and is continually paſſing away; that I have been ſo much diverted and ſtop'd in my Purſuits and Courſe by the Careſſes of earthly Enjoyments, 2 *Sam.* ii. 23. I deſire to bleſs God, that the Concerns of Heaven and another World have, as I hope, the chief Sway with me: May they have my whole Heart, and be all in all to me!

A PRAYER *and* COMPLAINT.

LORD, thou art the Father of Mercies, and the God of all Grace; the Author of every good and perfect Gift. I have nothing but what I have received from thy Bounty: All my Light, Life and Comfort is from the Fountain of thy Grace. When I look back upon the Methods of that Grace towards me, in calling, renewing, ſanctifying, ſupporting me hitherto; when I remember what a Maſs of Darkneſs, Stupidity, Folly, and Enmity I was, and how much thou haſt diſtinguiſh'd and enrich'd me; I am convinc'd I owe thee more than Words can pay; more than Time,

Time, than Eternity can pay. But Oh! how am I here confin'd, and at a Loſs? my Sentiments and Affections are low, my Expreſſion and Language lower. Accept, Lord! a willing Mind. When my Harp is ſtrung, and my Tongue touch'd with a Coal from thy Altar; when I have learnt the Notes that ſuit the great Subject, *then* I ſhall praiſe thee. And, O my Soul! look back on thy paſt Conduct. *The Grace of the Lord Jeſus* has been *exceeding abundant*; but thy Love, Gratitude, and Obedience have not equally abounded. I have been far from walking worthy of the Lord to all pleaſing, and ſhewing forth the Praiſes of him, who has called me out of Darkneſs into his marvellous Light. I have not render'd unto the Lord according to the Benefits done unto me; have not attended to my Call, and improv'd his Grace; have been fooliſh, diſobedient, bent to Backſliding; have Mercy upon me, O my God! don't abandon and forſake me. I have ſinn'd againſt thee, wrong'd my own Soul, obſtructed thy Grace and my own Comforts; forgive what is paſt; ſtrengthen what remains; perform the good Work in me to the Day of Chriſt Jeſus; and when the Top-ſtone of this glorious Building is brought forth, I ſhall for ever cry *Grace, Grace to it.*

Of the Aſſiſtance of God's Spirit in the Chriſtian Life.

PHIL. i. 19. *And the Supply of the Spirit of* JESUS CHRIST.

Seventh Specimen.

THERE are few Miſtakes in Religion, as I apprehend, more prejudicial to Chriſtianity and the Souls of Men, than that of confining the Office of the Holy Spirit to the firſt Diſpenſation of the Goſpel, and to his extraordinary Works, at that Time. Chriſt has promiſed his Spirit to *abide* with the Church *for ever*, John xiv. 16. His Preſence and Help was not to be reſtrain'd to one Age. As long as Chriſt has a Church, his Spirit will have the Forming and Conduct thereof. Lord, I would not deny what thou haſt promiſed, nor reject what I ſo much need. What a poor, diſabled, lifeleſs, ſtupid Thing had I been without thy Spirit, and ſhou'd I ſoon become, ſhouldeſt thou withdraw his Influences, with-hold his Communications! I wou'd not for a World be deprived of his Light, Help and Comfort; the continued Supply of the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt.

That I may have the proper Advantage of this Exerciſe, and of the Subject I have choſe now to review, I wou'd make a few Remarks upon it: As (1ſt,) That *the Spirit of God* is promiſed and given to all the faithful; to all the genuine Members of the Chriſtian Church. *Know ye not that ye are the Temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you*, 1 Cor. iii. 16. vi. 19. *By one Spirit we are all baptized into one Body*, 1 Cor. xii. 13. *By this we know that he abideth in us by his Spirit that he hath given us*, 1 John iii. 24. *Becauſe we are Sons, God hath ſent forth the*

the Spirit of his Son into our Hearts, Gal. iv. 6. The Church is Chriſt's Body, animated and influenc'd by his Spirit, communicated from him to every Member.

2dly, the Want of the Spirit is repreſented in Scripture, as a Mark of Excluſion from the Chriſtian Church; and of a State of Sin and Death. *Through him we have Acceſs by one Spirit, unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more Strangers and Foreigners, but Fellow-Citizens with the Saints, and of the Houſhold of God*, Eph. ii. 18, 19. Intimating, that ſuch who have not Acceſs by the Spirit, are Strangers, and don't belong to that bleſſed Community, the Houſhold of God! which is alſo imply'd, *Rom.* viii. 14. *As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they* (and they only) are the Sons of God: And 'tis expreſs'd in ſo many Words, *Rom.* viii. 9. *If any Man have not the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of his.* Lord, grant me thy Spirit, that great Bond of Union with thyſelf, and Mark of Relation to thy Church! the Principle of divine Life here, and Pledge of immortal Life hereafter, 2 *Cor.* v. 5.

3dly, Every Believer receives the Spirit of God at the time of his Converſion or effectual Calling: He may have enjoyed his common Influences and Operations before; but now he comes and takes Poſſeſſion of the Soul, enthrones himſelf in the Heart; having prepar'd himſelf a Temple, henceforth he reſides in it. *Ye are not in the Fleſh, but in the Spirit, if ſo be the Spirit of Chriſt dwelleth in you*, Rom. viii. 9. Whilſt Sinners are *in the Fleſh*, under the Influence and Government of Senſe, of carnal Principles, and fleſhly Appetites, *they have not the Spirit of God*, Jude 19. But when he has ſubdu'd theſe, by that Grace he is the Author and Worker of, he becomes an Inhabitant in their Souls.

4thly, The

4thly, The divine Spirit does not accompliſh all his Work at once, in the Hearts of Men, and after his firſt Grace and Help, withdraw his Influence, and leave them to themſelves; but *he dwells there*, affording continual Aſſiſtance to thoſe that reſign to him, defending and promoting his own Work. This the *Apoſtle* refers to, *Phil.* i. 19. *I know that this will turn to my Salvation; through your Prayer, and the Supply of the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt.* He was no Stranger to the Spirit's ſanctifying Operations; he had experienc'd the Advantage and Comfort of his Grace in many Inſtances; and yet was waiting for a farther Miniſtration, and *Supply* of the ſame Spirit; which is what he elſewhere calls *the Grace of God with him*, 1 Cor. xv. 10. O my Soul! reſt not in any original Stock of inherent Grace, how rich and full ſoever, but daily look up for additional Supplies. The firſt Grace is a divine Flame, as it were, kindled in the Heart; *the Supply* of the Spirit of Chriſt is neceſſary to preſerve, feed and ſtrengthen it.

5thly, This Supply reſpects every Grace, and is afforded for the Improvement thereof. The ſeveral divine Virtues or Graces *(the Fruits of the Spirit) as Love, Joy, Peace, Long-ſuffering*, &c. *Gal.* v. 23. are not the Effect of an inſtantaneous, ſingle Operation, but the Product of many repeated Influences, concurring with the Providences and Word of God, and all the Means God is pleas'd to make Uſe of for the carrying on his Intereſt in the Soul. God's Spirit is a *Spirit of Wiſdom and Revelation, in the Knowledge of Chriſt*, Epheſ. i. 17. He ſupplies with farther Inſtruction and Light, in the great Things of Religion, and Doctrines of the Bible: *Open thou mine Eyes, that I may behold wondrous Things out of thy Law*, Pſal. cxix. 18. He not only reveals the Object, but enlivens the Faculty.

The

The Bible is the Book of the holy Spirit, which he indited, and which he teacheth: Nor ſhall we ever underſtand it to Purpoſe without his Teaching. He ſupplies the *Faith* that is of his Operation, adminiſtring to it, ſtrengthening and confirming it, and drawing it forth in lively Exerciſe. And the ſame may be ſaid of Hope, Love, Meekneſs, Temperance, and every other Grace.

6thly, The Supply of the Spirit furniſhes the Chriſtian for all the Difficulties, Trials, and Duties of his Courſe and Warfare: It includes a *divine Ability* anſwerable to every Occaſion. *My Grace is ſufficient for thee,* 2 Cor. xii. 9. *He ſtrengthens with Might in the inward Man,* Eph. iii. 16. gives Power and Ability for doing, or ſuffering, for every Thing the Chriſtian is called to; *i. e.* he's ready to do this, if we, in a due Manner, look to him and depend upon him; his Supply will enable us to conflict with every Enemy, baffle every Temptation, 1 *Cor.* x. 13. *Eph.* vi. 10, 18. mortify every Luſt, *Rom.* viii. 13. to comport with every State of Things; with Proſperity or Adverſity; to go through both without Hurt, at leaſt without Ruin, *Phil.* iv. 12, 13. to converſe with Men, and with God; and in a Word to perform all the Offices of the Chriſtian and divine Life, in a Manner that ſhall be acceptable to God, and comfortable to ourſelves. Oh! may I have this *Supply!* may I be ſtrong in the Lord, and in the Power of his Might: I ſhan't then be afraid of Principalities and Powers, and the Rulers of the Darkneſs of this World. I ſhall object againſt no Services I am called to. The Unction and Supply of the divine Spirit will give me Wiſdom, Zeal and Courage for all, and in all. I ſhall then be ready to every good Work, and prepar'd to ſay with the *Prophet,* when one of the *Seraphims* had touch'd his

Lips with a live Coal from the Altar, *Here am I, ſend me*, Iſa. vi. 8. I'll only obſerve

7thly, That this Supply is diſpenſed and given forth in great Wiſdom, at ſuch Times, and in ſuch Meaſures as beſt ſuits the Circumſtances of the humble, reſigned, depending Chriſtian. We are directed to *come boldly to the Throne of Grace, that we may find Grace to help in Time of Need*, Heb. iv. 16. opportune, ſeaſonable, or well-tim'd Grace, as the Word ſignifies. The Spirit of God knows not only our Deſires, but real Wants; and knows how to adapt his Supplies thereunto.

O my Soul! be thankful for the Office, the powerful Aſſiſtances, and comfortable Supplies of the good Spirit of God: He is the *Schechinah* and Glory of the Chriſtian Church; the great Diſtinction of the Chriſtian Diſpenſation. The Goſpel is not only a Syſtem of the moſt excellent, divine Morality, but it promiſes and ſecures the Aids of the Holy Spirit, effectually to teach its Doctrines and Laws, to impreſs Hearts thereby, and mould them according thereto. It is accompanied with the Spirit, which the Head of the Church ſends down upon all its Members, powerfully working in them, and with them. Bleſſed be God for ſuch an Auxiliary; ſuch an Advocate; and for all the Help, Succeſs, and Comfort I have had under his Conduct. I would aſcribe the Praiſe of all to him; of what I am, and of what I have done; *not I, but the Grace of God that was with me.* And, O my Soul! as thou haſt experienc'd the kind Aſſiſtance of the good Spirit of God hitherto, in all thy paſt Difficulties, depend upon it for the future: And be not diſcouraged whatever Dangers, Temptations and Difficulties may yet lie before thee. Wait on the Lord, and thou ſhalt renew thy Strength: His Grace is ſufficient for thee; *ſtronger*

is he that is in thee, than he that is in the World. As the *Jews* ſay of their Pillar of Fire, and of a Cloud, that it levell'd Hills, fill'd up Valleys; the ſame may be ſaid, more truly, of the divine Spirit. It can bear down all Oppoſition; *the Mountain ſhall become a Plain before this mighty Builder. Work out* therefore *thy Salvation with Fear and Trembling,* and with a chearful Hope and Confidence; *for it is God that worketh in thee, by his Spirit, to will and to do of his own good Pleaſure.*

Two Things I would humbly reſolve on, and preſcribe to myſelf as ſtated Maxims and Rules for my After-Conduct, *viz.* always to keep cloſe to my Guardian, and endeavour to derive from this glorious Supply; never to depend on my own Wiſdom, Skill, Ability, but on God and his Spirit. *I can do all Things through Chriſt ſtrengthening me,* but nothing that's truly good, if left to myſelf. And *farther,* always to engage the Aid and Supply of the Spirit of Jeſus, as a conſtant Ability for every Work and Duty: To which Purpoſe I would take Care not to grieve, or quench the Spirit; not to neglect or reſiſt him, but obey, and comply with all his Motions; governing myſelf according to the Rules of his Word, and hearkening to his Suggeſtions in my Heart; praying *with all Prayer and Supplication*; and with that Zeal, Fervor, and conſtant Importunity, which I find neceſſary to obtain and ſecure the divine Ability: Favour me, O Lord, herein! *thou haſt promiſed to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him,* Luke xi. 13. I humbly plead thy Promiſe, and beg the Bleſſing proſtrate at thy Foot; *pour out of thy Spirit upon me from on high, and then the Wilderneſs ſhall become a fruitful Field. Grant me, according to the Riches of thy Glory, that I may be ſtrengthened by thy Spirit with Might in the inward Man.*

Of the extraordinary Aſſiſtance of God's Spirit in the Chriſtian Life.

Eighth Specimen.

IT belongs to the ſtated Office of the divine Spirit, which he performs towards all the Members of the Chriſtian Church, to ſanctify their Natures, and aſſiſt them in their Duties, in every Work and Service neceſſary to their Salvation; for theſe Purpoſes God has promiſed his *Spirit to thoſe that ask him*, Luke xi. 13. Accordingly all Chriſtians have the Spirit of God as the Principle of a new Life, *Rom.* viii. 9. *Gal.* iv. 6. All their Graces are his Fruit, and by his Operation, *Gal.* v. 22, 23. And all their Work done by his Strength, *Phil.* ii. 13. By him we mortify our Corruptions and Luſts, *Rom.* viii. 13. By him we diſcharge all moral Duties, and render Obedience to the divine Law, *Jer.* xxxi. 33. *Ezek.* xxxiii. 27. It was a good Admonition of our Reformers, who after the Recital of each Commandment of the Decalogue, order'd in the Service Book, a *ſurſum Corda*, directing the Eyes of the Congregation upwards, for divine Teaching and Help to comply with the Precept, *Lord have Mercy upon us, and encline our Hearts to keep this Law.* 'Tis by him we carry on our Devotions with Life and Comfort, *Epheſ.* vi. 18. *Jude* 20. And in a Word, by him that we perform all the Offices of the Chriſtian Profeſſion, *Phil.* iv. 13. Lord, whatever thou denieſt me, deny me not thy Spirit, as a Sanctifier, as the Author and Diſpenſer of Grace, and conſtant Supply thereof; *ſhed abroad thy Love in* my *Heart, by the Holy Spirit which thou haſt given me,* Rom. v. 5. May he dwell in my Heart; may I be his Temple; may I always live, ſpeak and act under his Conduct;

Conduct; walking not after the Fleſh, but after the Spirit.

But beſides the more ſtated and abſolutely neceſſary Aids of the divine Spirit, common to all the faithful, without which we could neither be Chriſtians, nor act as Chriſtians; there are higher Meaſures of the Spirit, which God vouchſafes to ſome Perſons at ſome Times; a larger Supply and more plentiful Unction thereof, as I may call it; and this either concerneth the Work of Grace *in general*, and the Improvement thereof in a more perfect Sanctification; or is granted *occaſionally*, for particular and ſpecial Purpoſes.

There's a ſpecial Effuſion of the Spirit, which concerns the Work of Grace *in general*, and the Progreſs thereof; ſome Chriſtians have a more glorious Anointing than others; the *Work of Faith* is fulfilled in them *with Power*, 2 Theſſ. i. 11. They are *filled with the Fruits of Righteouſneſs*, Phil. i. 11. *Full of Goodneſs, fill'd with Knowledge, able to admoniſh one another*, Rom. xv. 14. Their *Faith groweth exceedingly, and their Charity aboundeth*, 2 Theſſ. i. 3. The good Work, which the Spirit has begun in them, he has perform'd, and raiſed to ſome conſiderable Pitch of Eminency; they have not only Grace, but *Grace and Peace is multiplied* towards them, 1 *Pet.* i. 2. They are *full of the Holy Ghoſt and Wiſdom*; as was requir'd in the Character of the primitive Deacons, *Acts* vi. 3. The Effect of which is, that the *Heart is inlarged*, and they *run the Way* of God's *Commandments*, Pſal. cxix. 32. They proceed therein with Zeal, Chearfulneſs, and Delight, *walking in the Fear of the Lord*, and *Comforts of the Holy Ghoſt*, Acts ix. 31. O my Soul! pray, wait, and endeavour for this more abundant Supply of the Spirit of Jeſus. God has not only promiſed his Spirit for the abſolute Neceſſities of the Chriſtian;

and for working in us thoſe Things, without which we cannot be ſaved, but for further and fuller Meaſures of Grace and Conſolation. Theſe he exhorts us to ſeek after, and conſequently theſe he is ready to beſtow; he commands us to be *filled with the Spirit*, Eph. v. 18. To be ſtrong in the *Grace which is in Chriſt Jeſus*, 2 Tim. ii. 1. To *grow in Grace and in the Knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt*, 2 Pet. iii. 18. And as God's Command makes our Duty, it encourages our Expectation. I am thankful, Lord, for any ſaving Gifts of thy Spirit, but would preſs forward for higher Attainments. Sanctify me wholly; may my whole Spirit, and Soul and Body be preſerved blameleſs unto the Coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. My great Maſter had the *Spirit* without *Meaſure*, John iii. 34. and tho' I can't equal him, I would covet earneſtly the beſt Gifts, and be ambitious to have my ſtinted, limited Meaſure more and more inlarg'd. O may all the good Things, all the Graces of thy Spirit be in me and abound, that I may be neither barren nor unfruitful in the Knowledge of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt!

And as this more eminent Diſpenſation, and Help of the Spirit, reſpects the State of the Chriſtian in general, and his higher Stature in Religion; ſo it may be conſider'd as *occaſional*, and afforded at ſpecial Times, and with Regard to particular Circumſtances Sometimes God vouchſafes an eminent Effuſion of his Spirit, to fit the Chriſtian for difficult Duties and Services, that he may be called to. The Apoſtles experienc'd a great deal of this in the Courſe of their Miniſtry. With how much Courage and Bravery did *Peter* behave himſelf, when before his Enemies? *Acts* iv. 6, 7. *Annas, the High Prieſt, and* Caiaphas, *and* John, *and* Alexander, *and as many as were of the Kindred of the High Prieſt, were gathered together at* Jeruſalem: Theſe conven'd the *Apoſtles*

ſtles before them, and begin to challenge them for what they had done; but *Peter being filled with the Holy Ghoſt* ver. 8. with great Reſolution and Preſence of Mind confronts his Adverſaries, and defends his Cauſe: And with the like Magnanimity, and holy Fortitude does the *Apoſtle Paul* manage in his Anſwer at *Rome*; he was in the extremeſt Danger, as he intimates, when he ſays, *he was deliver'd out of the Mouth of the Lyon.* He was arraigned before *Nero*'s Tribunal; *Nero* himſelf, it may be, being preſent. His Friends all play'd the Coward and deſerted him: *No Man*, ſays he, *ſtood with me, but all Men forſook me, notwithſtanding the Lord ſtood with me and ſtrengthened me*, 2 Tim. iv. 16, 17. God ſtrengthened him by his Spirit with Might in the inward Man, and gave him a Greatneſs of Mind, which ſet him above the Inſults of his Enemies, and made him fearleſs in the midſt of all Danger. The ſame Grace is ſufficient for any of God's Servants, in any of their Difficulties: And 'tis what they may expect from him in ſuch Difficulties as they meet with in the Way of their Duty: He often inſpires them with Wiſdom, Courage, and Reſolution, ſuitable to the Work they are called to. This ſome have experienc'd, in ſuch a Manner, as has rais'd them above their own natural Timorouſneſs, and their preſent Diſcouragements, and left them under a full Conviction of a divine Hand with them. They have found that of the Apoſtle made good, 2 *Cor.* xii. 10. *When I am weak then I am ſtrong.* God's *Strength is made perfect in their Weakneſs*, 2 Cor. xii. 9. appearing in greater Glory, receiving Advantage from the Impotency, and Nothingneſs of the Inſtrument by which it works. I praiſe thee, O my God! for any Knowledge I have of this Matter; particularly at ſuch a Time, when ——thou ſtoodeſt with me; gaveſt me Counſel and

Courage, and deliveredſt me *out of the Mouth of the Lyon.* I will remember the Years of the Right-Hand of the moſt High; I will remember the Works of the Lord, ſurely I will remember thy wondrous Works.

Sometimes this Bleſſing (the ſpecial Effuſion of the Spirit of God) is afforded his Servants, to *prepare* them for ſuch Trials as lye before them in Providence: Thus God fortifies their Minds for ſharp Conflicts, and furniſhes them with Grace, according as their Day is. Thouſands can from their own Experience ſubſcribe to the Truth of what I am ſaying. Can'ſt thou not, O my Soul! add thy own Teſtimony amongſt the reſt? Doſt thou not remember the ſpecial Enlargements, and abundant Conſolations thou hadſt in thy Retirement, a little before that ſevere Trial occaſioned by—this made the Burthen ſit light, cloath'd thee with Armour, and carry'd thee through the Diſpenſation, with an Eaſe and Triumph of Mind!

Sometimes the Favour is granted when under Trials, and involved in the Difficulties of them. I have met with a Caſe (recorded by him that experienced it) of one who had a Variety of Troubles upon him at once, of an extraordinary Nature, any of which were enough to have cruſh'd him, and would have done it, as he ſays, had he been left to the common Meaſures of Strength and Grace, he had at other Times: During this Day of Conflict, it pleas'd God to manifeſt himſelf for his Support and Relief, in a glorious Manner; and he leaves the following Particulars recorded concerning this Diſpenſation (1.) That it was a Time of the moſt ſevere Trial he ever met with. (2.) That his Mind, whilſt under it, was brought to a full Reſignation to the Will of God, and to ſuch a Calmneſs and Serenity as he ſcarce ever enjoy'd before. (3.) That

(3.) That he was firmly perſuaded of a good Iſſue of all, and had the Comfort of the Deliverance in ſome Meaſure, even before it came. (4.) That this was the moſt happy bleſſed Time of Intercourſe with God in his whole paſt Life. Many Hours were ſpent upon his Knees; and often Affections rore ſo high, that he fell upon his Face, offering up Prayers and Supplications with ſtrong Crying and Tears; Tears of Contrition, and Tears of Joy; and ſometimes the Exultancy of the Mind was ſuch, that he could ſcarce ſuppreſs it: How long this laſted, or what was the Iſſue of the Providences he was exercis'd with, is not ſaid. In the mean Time I take it to be a pertinent Inſtance of what I have now under Conſideration *(viz.)* of the *extraordinary Help of God's Spirit*, and yet ſuch as the better Sort of Chriſtians have many Examples of, in the Courſe of their Life.

Sometimes the Spirit's extraordinary Aſſiſtance is in a Way *of ſpecial Conduct and Direction*. It may be the Chriſtian's Thoughts are embarraſſed, and divided about his Duty; he has been often, and long debating, and canvaſſing the Matter depending, in his own Mind; viewing it on every Side; but cannot bring it to an Iſſue. He remaineth ſolicitous not a little to diſcern the Way that he ſhould chuſe; deſiring rather any Suffering, than the leaſt Sin; and accordingly applies himſelf to God, by frequent fervent Supplication: At laſt God *by his Spirit*, as I am now ſuppoſing, determines the Mind, and this with ſo much Sovereignty, Strength, and Clearneſs, as gives full Satisfaction the Deciſion is from Heaven: Many Examples might be ſubjoin'd for the Illuſtration of this. I knew one who had an Affair of conſiderable Moment long upon his Thoughts, which occaſioned great Perplexities: Many Prayers were put up for divine Conduct. At laſt he came

to a Reſolution; but Providence remarkably interpos'd, and hinder'd the preſent Execution of what was deſign'd: In the mean while the thing began to appear in a new Light, and the former Judgment concerning it was leſs approv'd; a great deal of Thoughtfulneſs enſued; hereupon the Perſon concern'd looked up to God; went to his Bed; but his Sleep departed from him; and his Mind was ſo ſtrongly carried and bent againſt what before appear'd moſt eligible, that he could not but apprehend the Hand of God was in it. Bleſs the Lord, O my Soul! for any Vouchſafements of this Kind; that he has led thee in his Righteouſneſs, and has made his Way ſtreight before thy Face. Keep thy Eye always fixed upon him; live dependent and reſign'd, and he'll ſtill ſend forth his Light and his Truth: The Secret of the Lord ſhall be with thee.

Sometimes the Spirit of God concurs with the Chriſtian when imploy'd in Worſhip, and fills this or that Inſtitution and Ordinance with extraordinary Light and Comfort: He is made joyful in the Houſe of Prayer, and triumphant at the Lord's Table: Thouſands have found *there* that Inlargement of Soul, ſuch Sealing and Confirmation of divine Love, as has given them a delightful Specimen and Foretaſt of Heaven: Glad would they have been, had it ſo pleas'd God, to have drunk no more of the Fruit of the Vine till they drank it new in the Kingdom of Heaven. Sometimes the Chriſtian has had extraordinary Conſolations from particular Texts of Scripture, ſuggeſted, explain'd and applyed *by the Holy Spirit*. A Perſon of ſome Experience tells us, "That being for ſome Time un-
"der uncommon Exerciſes, when he awoke one
"Morning, he had that Text preſented to his firſt
"Thoughts, *Mat.* x. 29, 30, 31. *Not a Sparrow*
"*ſhall fall on the Ground without your Father, but*
"*the*

" *the very Hairs of your Head are all numbered; fear* " *ye not therefore.* This was ſo ſtrongly impreſs'd " on the Mind, and held forth the Sovereignty, " Tenderneſs and Care of Providence ſo clearly, " as to lay all Tumults, and beget a Calmneſs, that " is not eaſily expreſs'd." And the ſame Effect one tells us that Text had upon him, in the like Caſe, *Pſal.* xxvii. 10. *When my Father and my Mother forſake me, the Lord will take me up.*

Nor are ſuch Inſtances to be reckoned Peculiarities; the Experience of devout and obſerving Chriſtians can furniſh a large Collection of them; much leſs ſhould they be objected againſt and deny'd, * becauſe weak Perſons may be impos'd upon by their Imagi-

* I know ſome are ready to call all Pretences of this kind Enthuſiaſm; but methinks 'tis ſufficient for theſe wiſer Men to conduct themſelves in the Methods of their Religion, as they judge beſt, without too bold a Cenſure of Perſons or Things, they may not underſtand. I heartily wiſh them Succeſs in their own Way; but am perſuaded the more they depend on God and his Spirit in their Religion, the more Succeſs they are like to have. However, if they apprehend it their Duty to diſpute againſt theſe Doctrines, they ſhould not diſpute againſt the Senſe and Experience of others, who would be as unwilling to yield to Deluſions as themſelves. Nor can I imagine there is any Thing irrational and abſurd in the Aſſertions above. God, as Author of Nature, is immediately preſent with all his Creatures, and does immediately concur with ſecond Cauſes, in all their Operations; and why ſhould we deny the like Concurrence, in a Manner ſuitable to our Faculties, in the Works of Grace? Eſpecially when the Scripture gives us ſo much Ground to expect it. I ſhall here recite a Paſſage of the Author of a little Piece annex'd to the Life of God in the Soul of Man, called, *An Account of the Spiritual Life*, which comes recommended to the World by one that has taken ſufficient Care in his late Hiſtory of his own Times, to free himſelf from all Suſpicion of Enthuſiaſm: " Becauſe, ſays he, I have often mention'd the inward Lead- *P.* 128. " ings of the Spirit, there is great Need of explaining my " Meaning

Imaginations, and take the Impulſes of their own Minds for the Whiſpers of God's Spirit, and the ſpecial Conduct thereof. This is no Argument againſt

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" Meaning in that Particular; and it is briefly this: That all " ſuch as are renewed have an inward Principle of a divine " Life in them, which as it inclines them to all thoſe Things " commanded by God, either by bringing them often to their " Remembrance, by driving the contrary Objects out of their " Minds, by diſcovering the Excellency of the one and Baſe- " neſs of the other; or by any inward Delectation, ingaging " to the one and deterring from the other (all which, with " more of the like Nature, are experienced by pure Minds) " ſo it alſo ſets them in the Methods and Ways that may " lead to a high Pitch in thoſe Practices; and tho' the gene- " ral and conſtant Methods be in Scripture, yet there muſt " be a great Variety in theſe, conſidering the Variety of Mens " Tempers, Complexions, Educations, and Circumſtances. " Now for our Inſtruction in theſe, God gives a divine Light " to all that ask it of him; which ſuggeſts Means and Me- " thods to them for advancing this: And they feeling theſe " prove uſeful to them, may be well aſſur'd they came from " God: Such Perſons being alſo engag'd in many Things " that are of great Concern to them, but yet are left to their " Freedom, without any outward Intimations of the Will " of God to direct them, as in the Choice of a Calling, or " any other Thing of great Importance: If they carefully di- " veſt themſelves of Self-love and Prepoſſeſſion, and offer " themſelves entirely to divine Diſpoſal, and in great Humi- " lity and Meekneſs of Spirit beg Direction from God, he " will certainly, after ſome time of Dependance on him, by " Prayer and Faſting, clear the Doubt, either by ſome out- " ward Determination of his Providence, or by ſuggeſting " ſuch Conſiderations as ſhall incline them to that which " ſhall be moſt acceptable to him, and moſt for their own " Good."

Sundry Inſtances I could ſubjoin for confirming what has been hinted, concerning the ſpecial, extraordinary, occaſional Influence and Help of the divine Spirit. I ſhall add one from a Perſon of great Solidity and Eminency in Religion, I mean the late Mr. *Howe*. The Paſſage was wrote in the Frontiſpiece of the Bible he uſed in his Study, and is as follows, " *Decemb*, 26, 89. *Quum diu apud me recogitarem*, &c. after

" I had

gainſt the thing it ſelf, no more than ſome Mens Wreſting the Scripture to their own Deſtruction, as the *Apoſtle* tells us they do, 2 *Pet.* iii. 16. is an Argument againſt the Scripture, and a Proof that there can be no ſober and good Uſe of it.

I adore thee, O my God! for thoſe Specialities of thy Grace and Favour thou haſt diſtinguiſhed me with. I bleſs thee for thoſe ſeaſonable Sup-

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" I had long and ſeriouſly conſider'd with my ſelf, that be-
" ſides a full and undoubted Aſſent to the Objects of Faith,
" a vivifying ſavoury Taſt and Reliſh of them was alſo ne-
" ceſſary, that they might with greater Force and Energy
" penetrate into the Heart, where being deeply fixed and
" rooted they might more powerfully govern my Life, and
" that there could be no other ſure Ground whereon to con-
" clude, and paſs a ſolid Judgment on my good Eſtate God-
" wards; and after I had in my Courſe of Preaching largely
" inſiſted on 2 *Cor.* i. 12. *This is our rejoicing, the Teſtimony of*
" *our Conſcience,* &c. This very Morning I awoke out of a
" moſt delightful Dream, that a wonderful and copious Stream
" of cœleſtial Rays from the Throne of the divine Majeſty
" ſeem'd to dart into my Heart. I have often ſince, with
" great Complacency, reflected on that very ſignal Pledge of
" ſpecial divine Favour vouchſaf'd to me, on that noted me-
" morable Day; and have with repeated freſh Pleaſure taſted
" the Delights thereof: But what of the ſame Kind I ſenſi-
" bly felt thro' the admirable Bounty of my God, and the
" moſt pleaſant comforting Influence of the Holy Spirit, on
" *Octob.* 22. 1704. far ſurpaſs'd the moſt expreſſive Words
" my Thoughts can ſuggeſt. I then experienc'd an inexpreſ-
" ſibly pleaſant Melting of Heart, Tears guſhing out of my
" Eyes for Joy, that God ſhould ſhed abroad his Love abun-
" dantly through the Hearts of Men, and that for this very
" purpoſe that my own ſhould be ſo ſignally poſſeſs'd of,
" and by his bleſſed Spirit. *Rom.* v. 5." This Paſſage is tran-ſlated by Mr. *John Spademan,* and printed in the Life of Mr. *John Howe,* p. 230. If theſe Things don't agree with ſome Mens Schemes of Divinity, and are beſides their Expe-rience, that is no Argument againſt them, nor will be admit-ted as ſuch by thoſe that know them to be the greateſt Rea-lities.

plies

plies of thy Spirit, as a Spirit of Wiſdom and Courage, which I have experienc'd; for the extraordinary Supports thou haſt afforded me, under Preſſures, Burdens, and eminent Tryals; for the Conduct and Guidance of thy Spirit in ſuch Perplexities as I have often had before me; for all the glorious Advantages of his Miniſtry, both ordinary and extraordinary. I would triumph in thy Love, and make my humble devout Aſcriptions to the God of my Salvation, would ſet up my *Ebenezer*, my monumental Pillar, ſaying, *hitherto the Lord has helped me.*

And, O my Soul, be ſolicitous to ſecure this great Privilege, this Glory and Diſtinction of a Chriſtain: Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby thou art ſealed unto the Day of Redemtion; let all Bitterneſs, Wrath, and Anger, and Clamour, and evil Speaking, be put away with all Malice: do nothing to defile the Temple of God, or to give the divine Gueſt a Diſtaſte; endeavour to preſerve that inward Purity, that becomes ſo glorious a Preſence; walk humbly under ſuch a Diſpenſation; ſuch peculiar Indulgences and Vouchſafements; guard againſt all Pride, Vanity, and Self-ſufficiency: have a Care of being lifted up by the Abundance of the Revelations, leſt a Meſſenger of Satan be ſent to buffet thee: Say not thy Mountain ſtandeth ſtrong, thou ſhalt never be moved: If God hide his Face and change his Courſe towards thee, thou wilt ſoon be troubled: Thy Chariot Wheels will be taken off, and in vain doſt thou think to go forth as at other Times. O my God! never leave me nor forſake me: Uphold me by thy free Spirit, quicken me in thy good Ways; and always proportion my Strength to my Burdens and Tryals: When I am called to Work I never did, may I have the Strength I never had: Don't ſuſpend

ſpend and withdraw the Influences of the bleſſed Paraclete: Any Chaſtiſements, any Rebukes, rather than this: Thy Spirit is my Supply, my Strength, my Light and my Life: O! caſt me not away from thy Preſence; take not thy Holy Spirit away from me. I would ſooner ſuffer Annihilation, and be depriv'd of Being, than be forſaken of God, and ſhut out from his comfortable Preſence for ever.

Of the SPIRIT, GRACE, *and* GOOD WORKS, *&c.*

LUKE xi. 13. *How much more ſhall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?*

Ninth Specimen

MANY and great Diſputes are rais'd in the Church of Chriſt about the Subject I have been employing my Thoughts upon; about the Influences of the Holy Spirit; about Grace, the Sufficiency, Univerſality, Efficacy, Irreſiſtibility thereof, the Freedom and Power of the Will, good Works, *&c.* But as theſe debates are often render'd too intricate for vulgar Heads, and carry'd out of the Depth of the Unlearned, I ſhall leave them to ſuch, whoſe Leiſure, Profeſſion, and Studies may qualify them to judge of them, better than I can pretend to do. In the mean time, there are certain Truths of great Importance, which methinks I can diſcern in the midſt of that Duſt, that has been raiſed by the violent Agitations of learned Men upon theſe Subjects; certain Concluſions, that appear to me firm and ſolid; and which I purpoſe to abide by notwithſtanding ſome Difficulties in the Premiſſes. As,

1. That

1. That the Spirit of God is the Author of all Grace; the Principal and Fountain of all real vital Religion: This I take for certain, whatever Difficulties there may be in explaining the Operations of the holy Spirit, and distinguishing them from those of our own Minds: He has a stated Office in the Christian Church, which he continues to execute, and shall execute in the Hearts of all true Believers to the End of the World, *John* xiv. 16. *John* xvi. 7. He enlightens, renews, sanctifies, helps to believe and obey; in a Word, all our Motion in the divine Life; all our Tendency, and Advances towards Heaven are from him. *We are changed from Glory to Glory*; from one Degree of glorious Resemblance of God to another, *by the Spirit of the Lord*, 2 Cor. iii. 18.

2. I think it certain that good Men under the Gospel have the Assistance of the Holy Spirit, not only in Things *absolutely necessary* to their final Safety, and for the very Being of a Christian; but for his well being; for more eminent Grace and Sanctification, and for higher Duties and Services, as they may be occasionally imploy'd. The Gospel is attended with a more plentiful Effusion of the Spirit, and therefore is called by way of Distinction, *the Ministration of the Spirit*, 2 Cor. iii. 8. God has promised *to give the Spirit to them that ask him.* He will give with the Bounty of a Father; as is there imply'd; who not only supplies the Necessities of his Children, but delights in all their *real* Advantages, and true Prosperity. Not that every Christian has a Promise of the highest Measures of the Spirit: He may not be called to those Services, nor pass thro' those Trials that require them. The Rule is *when Sufferings abound, Consolation aboundeth by Christ.* He that's to fight with Beasts at *Ephesus*; to fall into the Mouth of the Lyon; to be

be caſt into the fiery Furnace, needs another ſort of Support, Supply and Help, than the common Chriſtian, in the ordinary Affairs of Religion. Nor are all Chriſtians fit for the like Meaſures of Comfort. They neither need them, nor can bear them; and therefore God, who is wiſe and kind in his Diſpenſations, will proportion his Grace and Favour to the Occaſions and Circumſtances of his Servants.

In the mean time, as the Chriſtian is bid to *ask and* he *ſhall receive*, to *ſeek and* he *ſhall find*, &c. not only once ask, but continue to ask, conſtantly ask, according as his Need and Occaſions are; ſo no queſtion God will anſwer his Importunities, and beſtow his holy Spirit, *(i. e.)* his Gifts, Graces and Help, in Proportion to his Occaſions. If he be called to act and ſuffer for Religion, in any eminent Inſtances, he ſhall have ſuitable Aſſiſtance: If he be called to be a Martyr, God will give him the Spirit of Martyrdom, *&c.* O my Soul! lye at God's Footſtool, wait beneath his Throne; and endeavour by humble, importunate Expoſtulations, to obtain this glorious Bleſſing. *One Thing, O Lord, have I deſir'd of thee, and that I will ſeek after all the Days of my Life! (viz.)* the Gifts and Graces of thy Spirit, and more abundant Communications thereof. Let the Men of this World divide the Riches, Treaſures, and Honours of this World amongſt them, grant me theſe better Riches; *the Gold tried in the Fire*, and 'tis enough. I want; I deſire; I ask no more.

3dly, I think it certain, notwithſtanding the confeſſed Myſtery there is in the Spirit's Operations, that yet they are, often at leaſt, *ſenſible Things*, and what may be felt, and certainly known. I may know, and do know as truly that ſometimes God is preſent by his Spirit, ſtrengthening, comforting, and quickening my Soul, and that at other times

he is abſent; as I know that ſometimes the Sun ſhines, when I ſee its Light, and enjoy its Heat; and that anon it's under a Cloud, or that it's Darkneſs and Night.

I don't therefore think it enough to expect the Aſſiſtance and Influence of the Spirit *in general*, * and depend upon him that he will aſſiſt me in my Duty and Work; but I wou'd be ſollicitous to find

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* I need not inform the intelligent Reader, that a great many Divines of conſiderable Name and Character, and who preſs the Duties of the Chriſtian Religion with much Strength and Clearneſs of Argument, ſtrangely overlook the Help of the Spirit: and notwithſtanding the Goſpel is ſo full of it, very much leave it out of their Writings, or at leaſt ſatisfy themſelves with now and then a general Hint, *that this is what every good Man may expect.* Indeed they rather ſeem to take it for granted, that all have the Help of the Spirit, than to direct Perſons to look for his Help, or how they may obtain it; as if it was a Thing afforded in Courſe, and in a general imperceptible Way, and attended with no Evidence to the Mind; and that conſequently Inquiries about it are needleſs. How much of this Strain occurs in Sermons and Books of Divinity, is known. A late learned Man appears exceeding ſollicitous to eſtabliſh Chriſtians in a Belief of their own Sufficiency, and that all Things required of them in Religion, are abſolutely in their own Power: This he thinks of the utmoſt Conſequence to them. I might give numerous Inſtances out of his Sermons lately publiſh'd. Diſcourſing upon our Saviour's Exhortation, *Matt.* v. 48. *Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father whith is in Heaven is perfect*; He begins thus in theſe Word: " It's plain, our Lord exhorts us to arrive at " a Perfection, which 'tis therefore neceſſarily ſuppos'd is in " the Power of Men to attain; for to adviſe Perſons to do " that which is not in their Power, is manifeſtly trifling with " them, *&c.* He adds, the proper and natural Uſe to be made " of this Obſervation, that we have it in our Power to be " perfect, as our Father which is in Heaven is perfect, is to " excite and ſtir us up to the greater Earneſtneſs and Diligence in attaining to this Perfection. If we believe we are " not able to do the Things directed to, in which this Per-

Dr. *Gale's* Sermons, *Vol.* II. *p.* 327.

" fection

find that he does ſo, and to be aſſur'd that I have his Preſence and Help with me, mortifying my Corruptions, governing and ſanctifying my Paſſions, directing me in my Difficulties, inlarging me in all Acts of Worſhip and Intercourſe with Heaven; rendring me free, expedite and chearful in Religion, and ready to every good Work. For theſe Purpoſes God has promiſed, and giveth his

" fection conſiſts, 'tis but a Folly to endeavour at it. Hence " it appears, that there is not a more deadly Poyſon to the " Chriſtian's Life of Religion and Virtue, than this fatal Per- " ſuaſion, which brings a *Dead Palſey* upon all our Powers, " and effectually deſtroys their Life and Action, And hence " we likewiſe ſee, on the other Hand, the great Uſe and Ne- " ceſſity of fixing the contrary Perſuaſion in the Minds of " Men: For this, it is plain, is at leaſt one main and neceſ- " ſary Principle of our religious Life, without which we are " perfectly dead to all Religion and Virtue; but when we " know, and are perſuaded that it depends upon ourſelves, " our own Choice, and Ways of acting and reaſoning, whe- " ther we ſhall obtain any particular Advantages or not; to " know and conſider that we may be happy if we will; that " nothing lies in our Way but our own free Choice; this " naturally fires our Reſolution, *&c.*" Methinks this Doctrine wou'd have been as ſafe and as uſeful, had he taken in that of the Apoſtle (*I can do all Things thro' Chriſt ſtrengthening me; by the Grace of God I am what I am; not I, but the Grace of God which was with me*; and that of our Saviour, *without* " *me ye can do nothing*) He goeth on " * be not frighted out of P. 333. " your Diligence in the Diſcharge of your Duty, by any tragi- " cal, but groundleſs Complaints of Man's Inability to obey " the Will of God: *Uſe all Diligence to be perfect, as your Fa-* " *ther which is in Heaven is perfect*, knowing that it is your " Duty to do this, and intirely in your Power." Here is not the leaſt mention of God's Help; and indeed 'tis but rarely that is taken Notice of by Writers of this Stamp. The reaſon of which, I apprehend to be, not that they deny all ſupernatural Aſſiſtance in Religion, and all Concurrence of God's Spirit; but, they take it for granted every Man has this, and conſequently we are concern'd only to exert our own Powers, without troubling our ſelves about Power from on high. Elſe-

Spirit; and as the Chriſtian expects the Bleſſing, ſo he experiences the Enjoyment, and can clearly diſcern whether he has, or wants it. Lord, favour me herein! In this lies the Peace, Joy, and Triumph of the Chriſtian Life. May I thus walk in the Light of thy Countenance.

4thly, 'Tis certain there is a Conſiſtency and Harmony between the Spirit's Help and our Endeavours:

Elſewhere he ſpeaks more directly to the Purpoſe, diſcourſing on that Text, *Matt.* iii. 15. *It becometh us to fulfil all Righteouſneſs.* His firſt Obſervation is, "That whatever is
P. 127. "meant by this Righteouſneſs, 'tis moſt certainly ſomething, "which is in our Power, and what we ourſelves may do "and perform: not that I would have it believed, that we "are abſolutely independent and ſelf-ſufficient. Theſe are un-"doubtedly Properties which belong only to an uncreated "Being; neither would I be underſtood to ſay, that we en-"joy the full Uſe of all our natural Powers and Faculties "without Controul; and that we are able to uſe them as we "pleaſe, without being under any Reſtraints, if our Creator "ſhould ſee fit to lay us under them. Neither yet would I "be underſtood to ſay, that we are able of ourſelves, and by "thoſe natural Powers God has given us, and which there-"fore are called *ours*, without any Aſſiſtance from ſuperior "Beings, do all that is needful for ourſelves, and fully "perform the ſeveral Parts of our Duty; for we know that "*the Spirit helpeth our Infirmities*, Rom. viii. 26. And God "has promiſed, *Ezek.* xxxvi. 26, 27. *A new Heart will I give "you*, &c. All theſe Things, however, are out of the pre-"ſent Conſideration, and the Righteouſneſs ſpoken of in the "Text, muſt be ſomething which (whether of ourſelves in-
P. 129. "dependently, or by the alone Force of thoſe natural Powers "we have received from God, or by any ſupernatural Aſ-"ſiſtances is nothing to the preſent Caſe, but it muſt be "ſomething which) is by ſome Means or other intirely in "our own Power." He adds in the ſame Page. "I don't "deny but the Things included in this Term Righteouſneſs, "may be what we need, the enlightening and quickening In-"fluences of the Spirit of God, to enable us to perform; "but ſtill you ſhould obſerve, that the Text, and all other

"Paſſages,

vours: Theſe are always in Conjunction. The Spirit's Help don't make our Endeavours unneceſſary; nor are our Endeavours ſufficient without his Help; there's a Concurrence of both. We are not therefore to ſit ſtill in Stupidity and Sloth, as if we could not move or act in Religion, without ſome extraordinary ſupernatural Excitation. In ſhort, all the Duties of Religion are our proper

" Paſſages, which preſs us to the Performance of our ſeveral " Duties, ſuppoſe them to be, by all neceſſary Aſſiſtances, " brought into our Power, and conſider them in that View " only, without any Regard to thoſe Aſſiſtances." I readily grant part of what is here aſſerted (*viz.*) that our ſeveral Duties are brought into our Power by all neceſſary Aſſiſtances, but can't think we ſhould conſider them in that View only, without any Regard to thoſe Aſſiſtances. I reckon that when we addreſs ourſelves to any Duty, we ſhould conſider it as a Work to be done by God's Help, and actually depend upon, and look up to him for his Help; without which Dependence we have no reaſon to expect the neceſſary Aſſiſtance. The Dr. adds, " they (divine Aſſiſtances) being no " part of our Duty, nor falling any farther under our Con- " cern than as they diſcover the great Goodneſs of God to- " wards us, and ſerve to encourage us in the Performance of " his Commands: What God deſigns ſhall be done for us, " by any other ſuperior Beings, lies upon them, not upon us " to do; and no doubt they will perform all his Will; and " the Work of the Spirit may be ſafely left to himſelf to do, " who will perform all his own Workings and Operations, " at ſuch Times, and in ſuch a Manner as the great Good- " neſs and Wiſdom of God the Father ſhall direct." I apprehend ſomething is wanting here by way of Supplement and Explication, if not Correction. Divine Aſſiſtances are, no doubt, God's own Work, but it is our Duty to ask them; and we have, I think, a farther Concern with them than to conſider them only as Diſcoveries of God's Goodneſs. We are concern'd to depend upon them, pray for them; not to forfeit them, and deprive ourſelves of them; concern'd to enquire whether we have them or not, and to endeavour to ſecure them with us in all our Duties, and in all our Occaſions.

Work, and the Aſſiſtance of the Spirit of God is ſo far from being an Excuſe for the Neglect of them, that it is the greateſt Encouragement to them and in them. *Work out your own Salvation with Fear and Trembling; for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his own good Pleaſure.* We are therefore to work, becauſe God worketh in us; that is, he aſſiſts us in our Work. He works with us, and we work through him and by him; not merely as his Inſtruments, but as proper Agents, moving and acting under his Conduct and Influence; hence that of the *Apoſtle, I labour'd; yet not I, but the Grace of God that was with me.* Attend, O my Soul! to thy Duty in the whole Compaſs of it. I am to believe, repent, obey, and work out my Salvation, looking up to Heaven for Grace and Strength. I would endeavour and exert myſelf, as if all was to be done by my own Power, and at the ſame Time depend on God, and on his Grace, without which I have no Power.

5thly, I

ſions. I intirely agree with what is farther ſaid "That we "not only may, but ought to have our Hope in, and De- "pendance upon his gracious and powerful Aſſiſtance, which "he will undoubtedly afford ſo far as is needful for us, and "which it becomes us, and is our Duty to ask of God "fervently in our Prayer, with a firm Faith and Confidence "in him." But I reckon 'tis not ſufficient that we ask this in general, and conclude that God will certainly and conſtantly grant it; and that the Work of the Spirit may be ſafely left to himſelf, as he expreſſes it, if that mean that there needs no Endeavours on our part to engage him to work, or that the general Help promiſed to good Men is all they may expect. I ſuppoſe a conſtant Concurrence of the divine Spirit neceſſary to the Performance of our reſpective Duties; that this good Men are to wait and pray for; that they may know when they have it, and when they have it not; and that upon a preſent, actual Concurrence and Aſſiſtance of the Spirit, their Ability and Sufficiency for every Duty depends.

5thly, I take it for certain, that as the Spirit is given, in different Meaſures, to different Perſons, ſo this Difference very much depends upon their different Conduct in Religion, and the different Uſe and Improvement they make of the Spirit's Help. What God may do, by ſpecial Vouchſafement and Favour to ſome Perſons, I am not now inquiring; but do ſuppoſe that good Men have *more or leſs* of the Spirit, of his Gifts, Graces, and Aſſiſtances, according as they carry towards him. *To him that hath ſhall be given, and he ſhall have more Abundance; but whoſoever hath not* (i. e.) does not rightly uſe and improve what he has, *from him ſhall be taken away even that he hath,* Matt. xiii. 12. The diligent Hand here maketh rich. The more humble, watchful, prayerful and circumſpect the Chriſtian is, in his Life and Behaviour, the more he ſhall abound in the Fruits of the Spirit, in his Gifts and Comforts; but if he grow ſecure, careleſs and ſlothful, indulging to the Works of the Fleſh, and by Bitterneſs, Wrath, Anger, or any other allowed ſinful Liberties, grieve the Spirit of God, he may expect, as a Puniſhment of his Folly, his withdrawing.

6thly, All who enjoy the Goſpel, have Reaſon to expect the *neceſſary* Aſſiſtance of the Spirit. *Our heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him,* Luke xi. 13. *to all that ask him.* Nor muſt it be ſaid that we *can't* ask aright. No doubt we are capable of ſuch asking as is requir'd, and made the Condition of receiving; otherwiſe here was a Promiſe and no Promiſe; a Promiſe to make us rather than encourage us. I don't pretend to ſolve all Difficulties here; but the Notions God has taught us to entertain of himſelf, of his Juſtice, Wiſdom, Mercy and Goodneſs; the Declarations he has made of himſelf in his Word aſſures

us, that he will not, does not lay our Salvation upon Things abſolutely out of our own Reach: Whatever Weakneſs, Impotency and Inability we are under by reaſon of the Fall, a ſufficient Remedy is provided through a Mediator. And when God has appointed us ſo many Duties, all tending to our Advantage, and promiſed to aſſiſt us therein, and to give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him, we muſt conclude theſe Duties are poſſible, and that the neceſſary Aſſiſtance ſhall not be deny'd; otherwiſe we make him a hard Maſter, *reaping where he has not ſown, and gathering where he has not ſtrow'd.* In ſhort, none ſhall periſh for want of neceſſary Aſſiſtance on God's Part: None can juſtly ſay, though they ſinn'd they could not help it; nor ſhall be able to ſay in Hell, that though they are damned they could not help it: Such a Plea would afford a Relief the Place of Torment does not admit of; wou'd cool the Tongues of the Damned, and, in a great Meaſure, quench the Flames of the burning Lake. All there will be convinced, that God was *real*, not only in his Threatnings, but in his Promiſes of Grace and Help. And this Conviction will render them utterly defenceleſs, fill them with ſilent Horror; and when under the juſt Sentence of God, leave them for ever *ſpeechleſs*, Matt. xxii. 12.

7thly, The Chriſtian, by reaſon of the Aſſiſtance of the holy Spirit, is furniſhed and enabled for all his Duty, in the whole Compaſs and Latitude thereof. *I can do all Things*, ſays the *Apoſtle*, Phil. iv. 13. He adds indeed, *through Chriſt ſtrenghtening me*; but then 'tis imply'd that Chriſt did ſtrengthen him; and he's ready to afford the ſame Strength and Sufficiency of Grace to every Chriſtian that depends upon him, and ſeeks to him: Not but that a good Man may be under preſent Inability, thro' the

the withdrawing of God's Spirit; he may want Courage, Wiſdom, Zeal for this or that Duty that lies before him; want Life and Flame to perform his Devotions in a ſuitable Manner: God will have us conſtantly to depend on himſelf, and not truſt to a ſuppos'd *general Help*, or a Proviſion and Stock of habitual Grace. In the mean time all the Chriſtian's Duty is made not only poſſible, but eaſy and ſucceſsful to him, through the Concurrence and Co-operation of the divine Spirit: And if he wants this Help, 'tis becauſe he forfeits it, or does not ſeek it: *God will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him.*

8thly, I think it certain that good Works, or our Sanctification in Heart and Life, are the End of all the Spirit's Operations and Help. *I will put my Spirit within you, and cauſe you to walk in my Statutes, and ye ſhall keep my Judgments, and do them,* Ezek. xxxvi. 27. All the Spirit's gracious Influences refer to this, and center in this, that we might be excited to our Duty, and enabled to diſcharge it; might be effectually taught to deny Ungodlineſs and worldly Luſts, and live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent World; that we might cleanſe ourſelves from all Filthineſs of Fleſh and Spirit, *perfecting Holineſs in the Fear of the Lord.* Indeed the promoting our Holineſs and Obedience, the refining our Natures, and conforming them to the Nature of God, is the great End of all God's Deſigns, and Acts of Grace and Favour towards the Church; and particularly of the glorious Scheme and Plan of Redemption by the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. *He gave himſelf for the Church, that he might ſanctify and cleanſe it, that he might preſent it to himſelf a glorious Church, not having Spot or Wrinkle, or any ſuch Thing; but that it ſhould be Holy, and without Blemiſh,* Eph. v. 25, 26, 27. *He gave himſelf for us, that he might*

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redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify unto himſelf a peculiar People zealous of good Works, Titus ii. 14. For this he lived, preached, and died a Victim; for this he promiſed, and ſent his Spirit. I can't therefore underſtand what they mean that ſpeak of good Works in ſuch Terms of Diminution, as ſome do; as if they were of no Neceſſity in Religion, and had no Influence upon our preſent, or future Happineſs; when really if they be left out of it, Religion itſelf is a mere Name. We muſt be careful indeed not to aſcribe to our Holineſs, Obedience and good Works, an Influence which does not belong to them, as when we ſet them in Chriſt's Stead; depend on them for that Merit and Virtue, which is proper to his Righteouſneſs and Mediation: In the mean time we muſt be equally careful not to ſubſtitute Chriſt's Righteouſneſs in the Place of our own, and depend ſingly on what Chriſt has *done for us*, without attending to what he requires ſhould be *done by us*. This is an Error of the moſt pernicious Conſequence; the worſt Hereſy, I reckon, that infeſts the Chriſtian Church; what tends to make void the Law of God; cancel the unchangeable Obligations we are under to our Creator; ſlur the Office of the bleſſed Spirit; ſubvert the Deſign of the Goſpel, and of all Religion, and ruin the Souls of Men: Certainly Holineſs, notwithſtanding preſent Blemiſhes and Imperfections, is the greateſt Excellency we can aſpire after and attain to in this World. And we muſt be ſo far from making light of it, and neglecting it, under a Pretence of *renouncing our own Righteouſneſs*, that we are to hunger and thirſt after it. 'Tis in ſhort, the Image of God reſtor'd, the Iſſue of the Father's Love, of the Son's Mediation, the Product of the divine Spirit, the Dignity and Improvement of our Nature. And as it ſtands in near

Connection

Connection with Heaven now, when complete, it will be a chief Jewel in our Crown, and chief Ingredient in our Happineſs for ever. O my God! grant me thy Spirit, as a Spirit of Grace, Sanctification and Holineſs; make me rich in good Works; help me to abound in all the Fruits of Righteouſneſs, *that I may be all glorious within, and have a Cloathing of wrought Gold, a Raiment of Needle-work.* Grant me all the Graces of thy Spirit, in greater Strength, Luſtre and Brightneſs, and I ſhall not envy the Worldling other Ornaments and Riches.

9thly, Whatever Darkneſs Men of a diſputing Humour may involve theſe Subjects in, the forementioned Particulars appear to me ſo clearly founded on Scripture, and ſo agreeable to the Scheme of Chriſtian Divinity, I may add of Chriſtian Experience too, that I won't eaſily give them up, upon every little Cavil or Objection, that may be rais'd againſt them. Upon the whole, there are two Concluſions I am fully eſtabliſh'd in the Belief of, and which indeed comprehend the Subſtance of what has been ſaid, *(viz.)*

That all our Succeſs and Attainments in Religion muſt be aſcrib'd to the Aſſiſtance of God's Spirit; and all our Miſcarriages to our own ſinful Neglects.

That every Man's Salvation is of Grace; and every Man's Damnation of himſelf.

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The SOLILOQUY *and* PRAYER.

O My Soul! wait on God for all needful Supply and Help of his Spirit. I have his Promiſe for this, and may be ſecure of the Performance, if I don't myſelf put a Bar in the Way, by deſpiſing the Bleſſing, or neglecting the appointed Means for obtaining it: *He'll give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him*; which includes a Sufficiency of Aſſiſtance, Power and Grace for all my Occaſions: And this it may be is intimated by the different Expreſſions the Evangeliſts make Uſe of, when they relate Chriſt's Diſcourſe about this Matter: *He'll give*, ſays *Luke*, *the holy Spirit to them that ask him*, Luke xi. 13. *Matthew* has it, *Chap.* vii. 11. *He'll give good Things to them that ask him.* God's Spirit is virtually all good Things; if I have that, I ſhall want nothing neceſſary for the Life and Comfort of my Soul, and for the ſucceſsful Management of my Chriſtian Work. Not that I have Warrant to expect all the Gifts and Graces, and all the Meaſures thereof ſome may have; particularly not ſuch as reſpect this or that Office, I am not called to diſcharge; or any ſpecial Services or Difficulties I am not called to: However, I may confidently expect Grace *ſufficient for me*; an anointing anſwerable to all my Occaſions, and conducing to my greater Eſtabliſhment and Comfort in Religion. And for this, O my God! I would conſtantly ſupplicate before thy Throne; asking, ſeeking, knocking, and by ſuch an Importunity, as ſhews a high Value for the Bleſſing, labour to obtain it. Lord! favour me herein; vouchſafe me thy Spirit, and all the good Things comprehended in that Gift, and I ſhall rejoice and triumph in them, more than in all Riches, than in the peculiar

liar Treaſure of Kings and Provinces. And among the reſt of the Privileges I enjoy, by thy good Spirit, may I have his *ſpecial Conduct* in the great Affairs of my Soul; be led by thy Spirit in the Ways of Righteouſneſs and Peace: 'Tis my Encouragement to conſider that Chriſt's *Sheep hear his Voice and follow him*, John x. 27. *And a Stranger they will not follow, ver.* 5. They will not follow a Stranger to Perdition, and ſo as to deſert Chriſt. The Spirit of Wiſdom and Revelation, that dwells in them, will be their Monitor, Guide and Safety. Lord! take me under this powerful Protection; preſerve me from all hurtful Errors, from every falſe Way; leave me not to the Pride, Vanity, and Treachery of my own Heart; to the Subtilty and Wiles of Deceivers, whether evil Men, or evil Spirits; to the Injuries, Deluſions, and Snares of a wicked World: Be thou my Shield and Guardian: Grant me the *Shechinah* of thy Spirit: May he dwell in me as my Strength and Defence, my Light and my Glory.

Of a Religious, Devout Temper.

THere are many Ways in which a religious Temper diſcovers itſelf. In general, in a conſtant ſincere Reſpect to God's Commands, and an Endeavour to ſtand compleat in all his Will; exerciſing ourſelves always *to have Conſciences void of Offence, both towards God and towards Man.* This is the great Criterion and Mark of true Religion, the general Province of it, as I may ſay; but then the particular Manifeſtations of it are various; and, it may be, in nothing does a religious Turn of Mind appear more than *in a conſtant, ſerious Ac-* *Tenth Specimen.*

knowledgment of God in all his Providences, and in a devout Intercourſe, and Converſe with him therein. Here lies the Diſtinction between one ſort of Men and another, the ſanctified, and the profane; the good and the bad, the devout and carnal; that the one overlook God in every Thing, and the other have their Hearts, Minds and Affections filled with him, almoſt in every Thing. It would be ſurpriſing, was it not common to obſerve, into what a woful Forgetfulneſs of God the greateſt part of Mankind are fallen. They live without God in the World; God is not in all their Thoughts: Though in him they *live, move, and have their Being; in his Hand is their Life and Breath, and his are all their Ways*; yet they have no Senſe of God on their Minds, but paſs Days, Weeks and Months without one ſerious Thought, or Acknowledgment of God: And even when he diſcovers himſelf in ſpecial, ſignal Providences; threatning, ſmiting, delivering and ſaving, their Inſenſibility remains; they are ſtill the ſame ſtupid, unthinking Creatures.

I have been ſometimes affected with ſome Paſſages in the Life of a grave and ſerious Man: Giving an Account of his former ſinful Courſe. He often remarks, among other Vileneſſes, how intirely he neglected God in all his Providences. "All "this while, ſays * he, I never ſought to God, "no, not ſo much as in a formal Manner, either "for the obtaining any good Thing, or the Re"moval of any Evil," though he was in a foreign Country, and expos'd to all manner of Temptations and Dangers. When he came off the Seas, upon his Return Home, he takes Notice, he never returned God Thanks for his Protection, nor once conſider'd that God conducted and preſerved him. And afterwards, being upon another Voyage, coming

* Mr. *Troſſe's* Life, *p.* 7.

coming from *Portugal* to *England*, after a very wicked Courſe of Living for ſome Years, he ſaith of himſelf, "I had then no Thought of God, my "Soul, of Heaven or Hell; but without the leaſt "Supplication to God for the Pardon of the Sins "of my wicked Life there, or for a ſafe Con-"veyance to my own Country, I went to Sea, "where we met with great Winds and ſtormy "Weather; yet, though my Danger was great, I "never offer'd to God a Requeſt, either to pro-"tect me, or put a Period to the raging Tempeſt. "When we were ſafely landed, I was nothing af-"fected with the Mercy, but preſently fell to the "repeating of my former Senſualities. I arriv'd "on *Saturday*; the next Sabbath was the firſt, which "for almoſt three Years I had an Opportunity "of attending the Publick Worſhip of God up-"on. On this Day I was exceedingly profane, "as heretofore I had been: Indeed I went to the "Church, heard a Sermon, preſented my Body, "but neither by a Thought in my Mind, nor "by a Billet in the Congregation, did I make *P.* 23, 24, "any Acknowledgment to God of his granting 25. "me a ſafe Arrival." I mention not this as any Thing extraordinary, only as an Example of what is acted over and over again, by Thouſands and Millions continually. 'Tis the common Caſe of carnal, irreligious Minds. Men eat and drink, go to Bed and riſe; paſs through dangerous Diſeaſes, Perils by Land, and Perils by Sea; are in Deaths often, and yet never own God in any Thing. If they have learnt a few Forms of good Expreſſion, *as God be thanked*, &c. there's nothing of Religion and true Devotion in them, but they are Matter of mere Form. Whereas, on the contrary, no ſooner does Religion take Place in the Soul, and Men are brought under the Influence and Power of it,

by an effectual Touch from the divine Spirit, but their Eyes are open towards God: And as Religion prevails in the Soul, a Senſe of God prevails alſo. They eye his Authority, own his Providence, and endeavour to converſe with him therein: And according as this Temper is more or leſs predominant, they are more or leſs religious.

I bleſs thee, O my God! for any Experience I have of thy Grace and Salvation in this Reſpect. That thou haſt deliver'd me out of that State of Darkneſs, Inſenſibility and Death, in which ſo many lie, wholly alienated and eſtranged from the Life of God: That thou haſt opened my Eyes that I ſee thee, and diſpoſed my Heart to own and worſhip thee in all thy Diſpenſations. Help me to attend to this more and more: May I be under more powerful Impreſſions of thy Hand; have a deeper Senſe of thy Perfections and Excellencies, and more clearly diſcern the Traces of theſe in all thy Ways and Works. Thy Providence is univerſal, extending to all Perſons, Things and Events. *Thou haſt prepared thy Throne in the Heavens, and thy Kingdom ruleth over all,* Pſal. ciii. 19. *Not a Sparrow falls on the Ground without our heavenly Father, and the Hairs of our Head are all numbered,* Matth. x. 29, 30. Lord, teach me to believe, reverence, and reſign to thy Providence in every Event, and devoutly converſe with thee therein. I would humbly reſolve to do ſo; help me by thy Grace particularly!

I would own and adore thy Hand *in common Providence,* in daily Life and Safety, *Acts* xvii. 28. In daily Supplies of Food; would ask Day by Day my *daily Bread,* Matt. vi. 11. depending upon thee for thy Bleſſing therewith; *for Man liveth not by Bread alone; but by every Word that proceedeth out*

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of thy Mouth, Deut. viii. 3. I would acknowledge thy Hand in my Protection every Night, in the Refreſhment and Comfort of Sleep; and when I commit myſelf to my Bed, commit myſelf to thy Care. *I will lay me down in Peace, and ſleep; for thou only makeſt me to dwell in Safety*, Pſal. iv. 8. *When I awake, may I be ſtill with thee*, Pſal. cxxxix. 18.

I would own thy Providence in my outward Proſperity, and bleſs thee that thou cauſeſt thy Candle to ſhine on my Tabernacle: Bleſs thee for Succeſs in my Affairs; for the Countenance of my Friends, and that *thou makeſt my Enemies to be at Peace with me:* I would always firſt ſeek thy Kingdom and Righteouſneſs, and be thankful that theſe things are, in any Meaſure, added to me.

I deſire to own thy Providence in my Adverſity; knowing that *Affliction cometh not forth of the Duſt, neither doth Trouble ſpring out of the Ground*, Job v. 6. They are no caſual Productions, no accidental Things, but the Appointment and Diſpoſal of a wiſe Providence: Help me to reſign to thy Sovereignty therein; to receive them with Calmneſs and Complacency; to lie at thy Foot, look upwards, do Obedience and Worſhip. 'Tis, if need be, that I am in Heavineſs, through manifold Temptations. Thou haſt the Management of every Rod; the Matter, Manner, Meaſure, Continuance, and all the Circumſtances of my Trials are from thyſelf. I would not therefore rudely object againſt thy Proceedings, charge God fooliſhly, but be *dumb, and not open my Mouth, becauſe thou haſt done it.* I approve, O Lord, thy Diſcipline, and rejoice I am in the Hands of my heavenly Father, and in the Aſſurance thou haſt given me, *that all Things ſhall work together for my Good*, Rom. viii. 28. Nor would I be ſo ſollicitous to have the Rod removed as ſanctified. Lord, take thy own Method with me; and if this Rebel of a falſe Heart

murmur and clamour, impute it not to me. I deliberately conſent to thy Government: *Not as I will, but as thou wilt. Hic ure, hic ſeca, modo in æternum parcas.* Guide me by thy Counſel, and afterwards receive me to Glory.

I would own thy Providence in any ſevere Strokes of it; if thou giveſt *a Thorn in the Fleſh*, ſendeſt a Meſſenger of Satan to buffet me; trieſt me in any of my deareſt Enjoyments, I would ſubmit to thy Hand, and ſay, *Good is the Word of the Lord.* If this be neceſſary to keep me from being lifted up above Meaſure; to humble my Heart, and rectify my Frame, I deſire to kiſs the Rod, and adore the Wiſdom and Grace of thy Conduct. *Bleſſed is the Man whom thou chaſteneſt, and teacheſt out of thy Law*, Pſal. xciv. 12. I envy not the Eaſe and Proſperity of any in the Way of Sin and Death; *the triumphing of the Wicked is ſhort, and the Joy of the Hypocrite but for a Moment*, Job xx. 5.

I would own thy Providence in publick Affairs, thoſe of the Nations of the World, in all their Changes and Revolutions, as knowing they are conducted by a wiſe and ſteady Hand, and ſhall anſwer the Purpoſes of the great Lord of all, and conſtitute part of his glorious Scheme in the Government of the World. Let not the Wicked lift up their Horn on high, and ſpeak with a ſtiff Neck; *for Promotion cometh neither from the Eaſt, nor from the Weſt, nor from the South; but God is Judge, he putteth down one, and ſetteth up another*, Pſal. lxxv. 5, 6. *The moſt High ruleth in the Kingdom of Men, and giveth it to whomſoever he will*, Dan. iv. 32. Whatever Projects Men may form for themſelves, the Almighty Sovereign of the World is ſtill carrying on his own Wiſe and great Deſigns: He is God, and there is none elſe, *declaring the End from the Beginning, and from the ancient Times, the Things that are not yet done, ſaying,*

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my Counſel ſhall ſtand, and I will do all my Pleaſure, Iſa. xlvi. 9, 10. May I not therefore be afraid, *though the Earth be removed, and the Mountains caſt into the midſt of the Sea!* I will wait, O Lord, for thy Salvation. I would own thy Providence in the Affairs of thy Church; In its Oppreſſions, Perſecutions, Apoſtaſies, Deliverances and Enlargements; In the Rage of Enemies; In the Animoſities, Feuds and Weakneſſes of Friends; In the Affairs of my Family and Relations; In the Comfort thou giveſt me in ſome; In the Diſappointment I meet with in others. I would view all theſe Things with a calm, compoſed Mind, endeavouring to attend my own Part, that is, my Duty, and leave the reſt to God. *The Lord is Righteous in all his Ways, and Holy in all his Works.*

I would own thy Providence in my religious Affairs; would daily obſerve my Heart, Temper, and Frame, Miſcarriages and Infirmities, Diſcouragements, Darkneſs and Fears; mark thy Withdrawings; bleſs thee for thy Preſence, Conduct, and Help; and daily make my Peace with thee through the Mediator.

O my Soul! here employ thy Devotion: Thus walk with God, and maintain a ſerious Intercourſe with him in all his Providences; in ſtated, common Providences, in ſpecial, occaſional Providences; exerciſing ſuch Graces as anſwer the ſeveral Diſpenſations of God towards thee. Lord, work up my Mind to this Temper and Frame; teach me an habitual Dependence upon thee; a chearful Submiſſion to thee; a holy Complacency in all thy Ways: *Let thy Will be done on Earth, as in Heaven.* I reſign, O Lord, to thy future Conduct, and would be ready to receive either Good or Evil at thy Hand! Order the whole State of my Affairs for the beſt; and I would ever eſteem that beſt, which is beſt for the Soul, beſt for Everlaſting.

Of the ſpecial Conduct of Providence.

PROV. iii. 5, 6. *Truſt in the Lord with all thy Heart, and lean not to thy own Underſtanding; in all thy Ways acknowledge him, and he ſhall direct thy Paths.*

Eleventh Specimen.

'TIS the undoubted Privilege of good Men that they are under the divine Conduct, not only in the Affairs of their Souls, and that reſpect Religon directly; but in the Affairs of this World; eſpecially ſuch as are moſt important, and have the greateſt Influence upon their religious Intereſts; *a good Man's Steps are ordered by the Lord*, Pſal. xxxvii. 23. Nor do they enjoy only a common and general Conduct: ſuch as preſerves them from certain Ruin and Deſtruction; but they may expect, if they wait on God for it, particular and ſpecial Conduct; an immediate Interpoſition of the Hand of God in their Affairs; pointing out to them the Way of Duty and Safety. This has been owned by many eminent Perſons, of great Sobriety in Religion, who have appear'd as free, as any, of the leaſt Tincture of Enthuſiaſm. "Thoſe that truly fear God (ſays the renown'd Sir * *Matthew Hale*) have a *ſecret Guidance* from a higher Wiſdom than what is barely humane; namely by the Spirit of Truth and Wiſdom, that doth really and truly, but *ſecretly* prevent and direct them. And let no Man think this is a piece of *Fanaticiſm*. Any Man that truly and ſincerely fears Almighty God; that relies upon him, calls upon him for his Guidance and Direction; hath it as really as the Son hath the Counſel and Direction of his Father: And though the Voice be not audible,

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* Contemplations Moral and Divine, *Vol.* I. *p.* 30.

" and the Direction always perceptible to Senſe, " yet it is equally as real as if a Man heard the " Voice, ſaying, *This is the Way, walk in it.* And " this ſecret Direction of Almighty God is prin- " cipally ſeen in Matters relating to the Good of " the Soul; but it may alſo be found in the great " and momentous Concerns of this Life; which " a good Man that fears God, and begs his Di- " rection, ſhall very often, if not at all times find." That devout and holy Man, *Biſhop Leighton*, in ſeveral of his Letters, that I have had an Opportunity of peruſing, by the Favour of a Friend, often ſpeaks of the ſpecial Direction and Conduct of God, as what good Men may expect in their particular Affairs. Thus, writing to a Friend, that it ſeems had a Matter of Difficulty before him; " I know, ſays he, you will endeavour to ſet your " ſelf on as ſtrong a Guard, as you can, againſt " the Aſſaults you may meet with from divers " well-meaning Perſons, but of weak Underſtand- " ings, and ſtrong Paſſions; and will maintain the " Freedom of your own Mind both firmly and " meekly. Our Buſineſs is the Study of Since- " rity and pure Intention; and then certainly our " bleſſed Lord will not ſuffer us to loſe our Way " for want of Light: We have his Promiſe, that " if in all our Ways we acknowledge him, he " will direct our Paths.

I grant, there is no little Difficulty in diſcerning the divine conducting Hand; no little Danger, in ſome Tempers eſpecially, of being impos'd upon, and miſtaking a ſtrong Fancy of our own for the Voice of God: Yet undoubtedly, tho' ſome may be deceived, all are not. God knows how to do his own Work, and preſerve his Servants from Deluſion: Sometimes I reckon the Conduct *is leſs ſenſible.* God leads us to our Duty through

common Means; as the Advice of Friends; the Deliberation of our own Minds; whereby we become determined this way or that, without perceiving any ſpecial Interpoſal of Providence; and yet in this Caſe we may have the Benefit of his Guidance. God may direct our Friends to ſuch Advice as they give; and if ſeveral adviſe, direct us which Advice to prefer and follow; may gently lead our own Thoughts to this or that Iſſue, *&c.* Sometimes the Conduct is afforded with more Clearneſs and Strength of divine Light. I knew one who had an Affair before him, of much Conſequence in his future Life; after long Conſideration, and no ſmall Sollicitude, a ſudden Thought ſtruck into the Mind; which determin'd him at once, in ſuch a Manner, that he could not but think it was from God: And the ſame Judgment he continued to make of it afterwards. Sometimes the Perſon in Suſpenſe is directed to a Text of Scripture, that contains a ſort of a Reſolution of the Difficulty, which is ſet home with Authority and ſpecial Application to the preſent Purpoſe. Such as know nothing of theſe Things may laugh at them; but good Men will not be laughed out of their Comforts and Dependence on God: Frequently this ſpecial Conduct and Determination from Heaven is given *gradually*; ſome Hints at one time, ſome at another; and as at different times, ſo by different Means: Whilſt the Chriſtian is waiting upon God, and looking up to him, and is ſtill wavering; inclining firſt to one Thing, then to another; at laſt God interpoſes by a ſpecial Providence for his Help: And it may be by the Miniſtry of ſuperior, inviſible Beings; his own good Spirit, or Angels; either, or both, ſuggeſts ſomething that preponderates, and determines him. But whatever Darkneſs or Difficulty there may be in the Circumſtances, the Thing itſelf

ſelf I reckon certain, and what many Chriſtians have experienc'd, I mean a ſpecial Light and Conduct from Heaven in their Affairs.

I don't ſuppoſe that all good Men enjoy this Privilege; much leſs at all times, and in all their Concerns: All indeed have the neceſſary *Leading of God's Spirit*, in the Affairs of their Salvation, *Rom.* viii. 14. And this is what we ſhould be moſt ſollicitous about: But the peculiar ſpecial Conduct I am now ſpeaking of, is ordinarily vouchſafed to *more eminent Chriſtians*; to ſuch as are moſt obſervant of Providence, reſign'd to it, and dependent upon it; to ſuch as are moſt devout and prayerful: 'Tis uſually granted upon much ſerious Supplication, and upon ſpecial Occaſions; in this or that more important Turn or Difficulty of Life, wherein the Chriſtian's Duty, Uſefulneſs and Comfort is very much concern'd; I may add, in which alſo the Credit and Intereſt of Religion may be concerned. In ſuch Caſes, I doubt not, Perſons of a more religious, devout Temper may have, and often have a ſpecial Conduct from above.

I adore thee, O my God! for any Inſtances I have experienc'd of thy Kindneſs and Favour in this Reſpect. O my Soul! ſtill wait on God; live in a conſtant, humble Dependence upon him. *Truſt in the Lord with all thy Heart, and lean not to thy own Underſtanding.* Thou can'ſt not ſee into Futurity; knoweſt not what *will* be on the Morrow, nor art fit to chuſe what *ſhould* be. Leave all therefore in the Hands of infinite Wiſdom; conſult the divine Oracle, and beg his *Urim* and *Thummim* may be with thee: In all thy Ways acknowledge God, and he will direct thy Paths. Lord, I plead thy Promiſe: Send forth thy Light and Truth, let them lead me. *Lead me, O Lord, in thy Righteouſneſs, becauſe of my Enemies and Obſervers: Make thy Way ſtreight before my Face.*

Of Contentment in our preſent State, and Complacency in Providence.

PHIL. iv. 11. *I have learnt in whatſoever State I am, therewith to be content.*

Twelfth Specimen.

GLorious was the Attainment of this great *Apoſtle:* He was not only ſubmiſſive to the Will and Appointment of God in every Condition of Life, and State of Things through which he paſſed, but ſeems to have had a Complacency therein: All his Concern was about his Duty, and how to comport with the Providence of God in its ſeveral *Phænomena* and Appearances; leaving God, without any Sollicitude on his own Part, to diſpoſe of his outward Affairs as he ſhould pleaſe.

'Tis among the Infirmities of Mankind, that they are generally deſirous of Change, and ſomething new: They would be in ſome other, and as they think better State; would have ſomething out of their State that they do not like, and have ſomething in it they more like. And this unhappy, undutiful Turn of Mind gives them no ſmall Uneaſineſs. Our *Apoſtle*, 'tis evident, conducted himſelf with higher Wiſdom; he had learnt, *in whatſoever State he was, to be content*; not that every State was perfectly the ſame to him: He could not but find a ſenſible Difference between good Treatment and bad in the World; between the faithful Friendſhip of his beloved *Titus*, 2 Cor. ii. 13. 2 Cor. vii. 6. and the Treachery and Cowardice of *Demas* and others, 2 *Tim.* iv. 10, 16, 17. between the Goodneſs and Kindneſs of *Gaius* and *Oneſimus*, John iii. 1. 2 Tim. i. 16, 17, 18. and the Malice of *Alexander* the Copperſmith, 2 *Tim.* iv. 14. between the warm Affection and Zeal of ſome

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he laboured amongſt, and their After-Coolneſs towards himſelf, and Apoſtacy from the Goſpel, *Gal.* iv. 14, 15, 16. 2 *Cor.* xii. 15. between Perſecution, Bonds and Impriſonment, and Liberty and Freedom: Between the Viſions of the third Heavens and the Thorn in the Fleſh. It was impoſſible that theſe Things ſhould appear alike grateful to him, and be entertain'd with the like Reliſh; and yet he had learnt *in every State to be content:* He had an All-ſufficiency in God, and a ſort of * *Self-ſufficiency* in his own Mind, from divine Principles implanted there; which led him to converſe with God, derive from him, and live upon him in all; conſequently not only to bear every State without Murmuring and Reluctancy, but *to reſt* in it with a ſort of Pleaſure, chuſing it as what God has choſe and appointed. * Αυταρκης ειναι.

O my Soul! aim at, and endeavour for this bleſſed Evenneſs of Mind; a dutiful, calm, divine Compoſure; an holy Contentment in every State; then nothing can come amiſs to thee; every State will be ſafe, and in the main comfortable. Thou muſt *learn it*; learn it of God, and therefore frequently apply to him by fervent, importunate Prayer for his Teaching; and beg he would diſcipline, and form thy Heart thereunto. And as a Means on thy Part, often ſet before thee ſuch Conſiderations, as may be uſeful to promote ſuch a Temper, a full Contentment in every State of Things. Conſider,

1ſt, That God governs the World, and has the ordering of all Affairs; ſuch as concern thyſelf in particular, as well as others: Nothing tends more to quiet the Mind, under all the Trials and Grievances of Life, than a firm Belief of divine Providence: And as this is ſo fully ſet forth in the Bible, that glorious Syſtem, and Rule of his Religion,

gion, the Chriſtian has unſpeakably the Advantage of others. The Heathens were miſerably in the dark in this Reſpect: Some of the Philoſophers denied all Providence; as the *Epicureans:* And indeed 'tis no Wonder, that they who thought the World was made by Chance, ſhould think it might be govern'd ſo. *Ariſtotle* is accuſed, as confining it to the Heavens above, and denying that it interpos'd in human Affairs: And even that Sect (the *Stoicks*) that were the moſt zealous Aſſertors of Providence, ſo reſtrained and limited it, as to leave it of little Uſe and Comfort to Mankind. Some taught indeed that there was a general Providence, which watch'd over, and governed the ſeveral Species, and Sorts of Beings, but that it did not extend to Individuals or Particulars: Others, that went farther, exempted the leſſer Concerns of Men from the Cognizance of Providence. Hence that known Saying, mentioned in *Cicero, magna curant Dii, parva negligunt:* And, ſays the Poet, *non vacat exiguis,* &c. They thought the Gods might ſuper-intend Matters of the higheſt Importance, as the ſetting a Ruler over a Nation, we'll ſuppoſe; but that they did not intereſt themſelves in the low Affairs of private Families, and particular Perſons. And it ſeems the beſt of them aſcrib'd to virtuous and good Men a Sort of Self ſufficiency independent on God and Providence. *Quid Votis opus eſt,* ſays *Seneca, turpe eſt Deos fatigare, fac te fœlicem?* What Occaſion for importuning the Gods, and wearying them with your Prayers and Din? take Care of your own Happineſs yourſelf. Theſe were the Principles of the People, that *ſat in Darkneſs, and in the Region of the Shadow of Death:* How uncomfortable they are, compar'd with that Scheme of Providence laid down in the Bible, every one may diſcern. I grant, Contentment was a Subject very much

much labour'd by ſome of them, particularly the *Stoicks:* But it is evident they wanted the true Foundation of it *(viz.)* the Knowledge of a divine Providence, ſuperintending and governing all Things. This the Bible ſupplies with much Advantage; which repreſents Providence as running through the World with a conſtant Sovereignty and Care. 'Tis univerſal, *Pſal.* ciii. 19. *Dan.* iv. 35. *Wiſe,* Iſaiah xxviii. 29. *Righteous and Holy,* Pſal. cxlv. 17. *Merciful and good,* Pſal. cxlv. 8, 9. *Powerful,* Dan. iv. 35. Iſaiah xliii. 13. 'Tis exercis'd towards good Men with ſpecial Tenderneſs and Love, 2 *Chron.* xvi. 9. *Pſal.* xxv. 10. *Matt.* x. 30. Contemplate, O my Soul! this amiable Subject; endeavour to be well eſtabliſh'd in the Belief of Providence; ſurvey it in all its Properties, and thou wilt find it the moſt proper Argument for Contentment, and a conſtant Source of Conſolation. God has Right to govern the World, all Perſons and Things; *he is the Kingdom:* He beſt knows how to govern it; and whatever Cenſures ſhort-ſighted, fooliſh Creatures may paſs upon his Government, there is no Flaw in it: *As for God, his Way is perfect,* Pſal. xviii. 30.

2dly, Conſider, whatever State thou art in, 'tis by the divine Providence: God has the ordering of it. *Not a Sparrow falls on the Ground* without him; *the Hairs of thy Head are number'd,* Matth. xxix. 30. If *Shimei curſe David,* 'tis *becauſe the Lord* commanded him, 2 *Sam.* xvi. 10. All the Ingredients in thy Cup of every Sort, and all the Variety of thy State are from him. By his *Favour thy Mountain ſtands ſtrong,* he hides his *Face,* and thou art *troubled:* He turns thy *Mourning into Dancing; putteth off thy Sackcloth, and girdeth thee with Gladneſs,* Pſal. xxx. 7, 11. However, ſecond Cauſes may concur, and whatever Guilt there may be

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in the Inſtruments of thy Trouble, Religion teaches thee to look above them to the firſt Mover. Do this, O my Soul! with that Reverence of the Authority, and Wiſdom of God that becomes thee; *be ſtill, and know that he is God.*

3dly, Conſider thy preſent State may be *beſt for thee*; if not moſt agreeable to thy Inclination, yet moſt profitable to the Soul. Hadſt thou the mixing of thy own Cup, thou wouldſt ſoon deſtroy thyſelf. Were all bitter Ingredients taken out of it, it might be more pleaſing, but leſs wholeſom: Such a Cloud thou would'ſt have ſcatter'd, ſuch a Burden removed, and art importunate that *the Thorn in the Fleſh* might be departed from thee: It may be the anſwering thy Petition would be the endangering the Soul. Oh! reſign to thy God fully, and without Reſerve; leave him to carve thy Portion for thee: His Wiſdom is infinite, he knows what's beſt, and thou art aſſur'd of his Faithfulneſs and Love. *The Hairs of thy Head are all number'd*; *All his Paths are Mercy and Truth unto ſuch as keep his Covenant and his Teſtimonies*, Pſal. xxv. 10.

4thly, Conſider there is no State of preſent Things, how favourable ſoever, without an Alloy. There's a Vanity and Curſe ſince the Apoſtacy in all our Enjoyments; and we do but deceive ourſelves, when we expect ſo much Relief as we are apt to do, by this or that Change. We find ſomething pinches, and makes us uneaſy where we are, and as we are, and therefore are for ſhifting, ſtruggling to throw off the Burden; but this is to no purpoſe, and is no other than the fruitleſs Effort of Men ſeeking Reſt here below, but cannot find it: Wherever we fix our Tent, even though we could chuſe and form our own Circumſtances, and repoſe ourſelves under the moſt pleaſant Gourd,

ſome Worm or other would ſmite it, and make it wither. " I ſee, ſays the excellent Biſhop *Leighton*, there is no Place, City nor Country, Valley nor Mountain free from that Sentence, ſo early paſs'd upon the Earth for Man's Cauſe, *Thorns and Briars ſhalt thou bring forth.* But he that is well ſhod, walks on the more ſafely, till he come where there are none. But ſince that is not here, we are to uſe the greater Coolneſs and Deliberation in our Removes: If your preſent Company be ſome Way irkſom, a greater Solitude may be more ſo, *&c.*" And in another Letter to the ſame Friend; " Thorns, ſays he, grow every where, and from all Things below; and to a Soul tranſplanted out of itſelf, to the Root of *Jeſſe*, Peace grows every where too, from him who is our Peace; and whom we ſhall find the more to be ſo, the more entirely we live in him; by being dead to this World, to Fleſh and ſelf, and all Things beſides him: Oh! when ſhall it be?" We ſhall ſtill find ſomething amiſs in every State, and if it be not our own Fault, may find Comfort in any (*i. e.*) in God, his Covenant, Promiſes, *&c.* Nor is there ſo much Difference in point of real Satisfaction, between one outward State and another, as we may imagine. We complain of Grievances in this or that Situation; we might find the ſame, or worſe in another: Nor can we flee from the Vanity and Vexation there is in all Things here below, till we are quite beyond them.

5thly, Conſider, that the preſent State, whatever 'tis, will ſoon come to a Period; will change in Courſe, and all the Trouble of it terminate with it. If thou haſt not ſo pleaſing Accommodations in thy Inn, as thou deſireſt, 'tis but for a Day or two and thou art gone; the *Faſhion of this World paſſeth,*

ſeth away, 1 Cor. vii. 31. 'Tis conſtantly paſſing, and will ſo ſoon be quite paſs'd away, that it is not worth while to be ſollicitous about a Change. The preſent Faſhion may ſerve for the preſent Time, ſince a new one is juſt ready to take place, which will change no more for ever. O learn to moderate thy Concern about this World, and the tranſitory Things of it. The Time is ſhort, *weep as though thou weepeſt not, rojoice as though thou rejoicedſt not.* The next State, now at hand, is the only State that deſerves and demands thy Attention. " * What is this poor Mo-" ment, and all that concerns it, to the immenſe " Eternity that we believe? And how doth one " ſerious Thought of it ſhrink all Affairs, publick " and private, and all this preſent World into no-" thing? What have we to think of, and when we " meet, to ſpeak of, but that, till the bleſſed Day " come that ſhall let us into it?" Oh! could I read aright that big Word *Eternity*, and underſtand its awful Sound, it would drown the Noiſe of this World, and ſilence its Clamours in my Ears. Lord, help me to look beyond it; to withdraw my Thoughts and Affections from it; to ſit down calm and eaſy in my State; eſpecially ſince 'tis by thy Providence, and by thy Appointment: " Seeing " our great Father's Love, (ſays the ſame devout " Perſon, mention'd more than once before) deſ-" cends to the ordering the low Concerns of our " Life, we were very unwiſe and ungrateful not " to obſerve him, and read the Print of his bleſ-" ſed Finger in them; who hath made Flies with " ſo much Art, and is truly *magnus in mini-" mis.* Courage, it ſhall be well! We follow a " conquering General; yea, who hath conquered " already: *Et qui ſemel vicit pro nobis, ſemper vin-" cet in nobis.*" Lord, I adore thy Condeſcenſion and

* Biſhop *Leighton*, in one of his Letters to a Friend.

and Goodneſs, that thou doſt intereſt thyſelf ſo much in my Affairs! *What is a Man, that thou art ſo mindful of him; or the Son of Man, that thou viſiteſt him?* And what am I? a poor guilty Worm! and yet thou careſt for me, 1 *Pet.* v. 7. I would think myſelf ſufficiently happy, and ſafe under thy Care; I deſire not to uſurp thy Province, for which I am altogether unfit, but repoſe myſelf with a calm Reſignation, Complacency and Delight, under the protecting, conducting Hand of my heavenly Father.

The CHRISTIAN'S *daily Walk.*

PROV. xxiii. 17. *Be thou in the Fear of the Lord all the Day long.*

Thirteenth Specimen.

THE ſacred Writer of this Book often aſſumes the Character of a *Father*; addreſſing himſelf to his Catechumens, or Scholars, as *his Sons*, Chap. i. 8, 15. Chap. ii. 1. Chap. iii. 1, *&c.* Not that we are to underſtand him, at leaſt not chiefly, as ſpeaking to his own Son; but rather as a *divine Teacher*, who takes this Title the better to engage the Attention and Affection of his Diſciples: In the mean time he delivers his Counſels and Maxims in the Name of God, the common Father of Mankind, and under the Conduct and Inſpiration of the holy Spirit. Hence we find the *Apoſtle*, in the *New Teſtament*, quoting a Paſſage of this Book in the uſual Stile, *Prov.* iii. 11, 12. applies it to Believers under the Goſpel, *Heb.* xii. 5. So that it was not any particular Perſon whom *Solomon* calls Son, to whom his Admonitions here are directed; nor muſt they be conſider'd as the private Advice

of this great and wiſe King, but as the Counſel of Heaven adminiſter'd by him. Thus we are to underſtand him, when he ſays, *be thou in the Fear of the Lord all the Day long.*

The Fear of the Lord is often, in Scripture, put for Religion: As *Pſal.* cxi. 1. *Prov.* i. 7. *Job* xxviii. 28. 'Tis common to deſcribe Religion by ſome eminent Branch or Grace of it; eſpecially if it be ſuch as has an Influence upon the whole, and be a ſort of a divine Principle from whence the whole will flow: And of this Nature is the Fear of God. 'Tis not only a Monitor to our Duty, but a Principle of univerſal Obedience; and accordingly often ſtands for the whole of it: So that *to be in the Fear of the Lord all the Day long*, is to be religious all the Day; to act according to the ſacred Rules and Laws of Religion.

And this includes in it ſuch Things as theſe; ſome juſt Notions and Apprehenſions of God, of his Being, Perfections and Excellencies, *Pſal.* ix. 10. of his conſtant Providence, Inſpection and Preſence, *Pſal.* xvi. 8. a Regard to his Authority, and to the Rules of Living he has preſcribed, *Gen.* xvii. 2. Luke i. 6. a Reverence of him, and Subjection to him as Governour, and a Sollicitude not to offend him, or tranſgreſs his Laws in any thing, *Gen.* xlii. 18. *Nehem.* v. 15. It implies Conſtancy and Steadineſs in our Courſe: We are to be in his Fear *all the Day long.* It implies a ſerious Acknowledgment of God in all *our* Ways, and in all *his* Works and Providences; and is, in a Word, what the Scripture ſo often repreſents under the Notion of *walking with God.*

Endeavour, O my Soul! to attend this; ſet the Lord always before thee; carry Religion with thee in all thou doſt; let it mix with, and govern all thy Affairs; *bind the Commandment continually upon*

upon thy Heart, tye it about thy Neck: When thou goeſt it ſhall lead thee; when thou ſleepeſt it ſhall keep thee; and when thou awakeſt it ſhall talk with thee, Prov. vi. 21, 22. Let Religion accompany thee through all the Occurrences of every Day; preſcribe Laws to thy Thoughts, Affections, Words and Actions, and conduct thee in thy whole Behaviour. Lord, help me by thy Grace thus to walk with thee; thus to be in thy Fear all the Day long: To which Purpoſe I would propoſe to myſelf the following Rules.

1ſt, I would reſolve to begin every Day with God, and conſecrate my firſt Thoughts to him. *When I awake,* ſays the Pſalmiſt, *I am ſtill with thee,* Pſal. cxxxix. 18. Not only under his Protection; for ſo he was when aſleep as much as when awake; but he was with him, as I ſuppoſe, in the devout Temper of his Mind. I would endeavour thus to be with God, ſaluting him with my waking Thoughts, ſaying, " In thy Hand, O Lord, " is my Life and Breath. I laid me down and " ſlept, thou madeſt me to dwell in Safety. I " worſhip and praiſe thee, O thou Preſerver of " Men. I commit myſelf to thy future Care; " keep me from the Evil, help me in the Duties " of this Day, make my Way proſperous, *&c.*

2dly, As ſoon as conveniently I can, I would retire for ſecret, ſolemn Devotion; and would take care, when nothing neceſſary prevents, that this be my firſt Work: Hereby the Mind may get a religious Tincture; be fortified againſt Temptation, and be better prepared for Duties and Trials. *My Voice ſhalt thou hear in the Morning,* &c. Pſal. v. 3.

3dly, I would take the moſt proper Time to call my Family together, and worſhip God with them: In which I would always thankfully acknowledge the Mercy of God, in the Preſervation and Safety

of the Family; recommend myſelf and Family to the divine Conduct and Bleſſing, and beſpeak his Preſence with me and them in the Buſineſs of the Day.

4thly, I would apply myſelf to the Duties of my particular Calling, and endeavour that Religion go hand in hand with me in all. Particularly I would reſolve to be *diligent* in my Calling, and as uſeful as I can in my Station, *Rom.* xii. 12. And as the Providence of God has ſet me above the Neceſſity of bodily Labour, I would improve that Diſtinction and Favour for ſpiritual Purpoſes; ſpending more Time than others have at Command, in Reading, Meditation and Prayer; in Works of Mercy and Charity, in profitable Viſits, *&c.* I reſolve to be upright in all my Dealings, not to defraud or go beyond any Man; remembring that God requires a juſt Weight, a juſt Meaſure, and a juſt *Ephah.* I would take Care not to incumber myſelf with too great a Multiplicity of Buſineſs, leſt that leave neither Time nor Heart for the Service of God. I deſire to conſider one Thing is needful; *to ſeek firſt the Kingdom of God*, and not to labour for the Meat that periſhes, but for that which endures to everlaſting Life: Religion, and what concerns another World, *is my great Buſineſs*, which I would mainly intend, and ſet myſelf apart for; and only ſubmit to the Services of this World in Obedience to the Appointment of God, and in Compliance with his Providence, and the Duties of my Station. I would conſecrate my common Buſineſs to God; undertake and manage my Calling in his Name and Fear. I would be ſenſible of the Snares and Temptations that attend my particular Calling, and guard againſt them. Laſtly, It ſhall be my Care to intermix ſerious Thoughts with my ſecular Buſineſs; to ſet the Lord always before

before me, be often looking up to him, refreshing myself with something of Heaven, whilst I am engag'd in the Affairs of this Earth. Lord, help me herein by thy Grace.

5thly, I would endeavour to improve the Company my Affairs may bring me into every Day, and conduct myself therein according to the Laws of Religion: Be careful not to be the worse for any Company, and that no Company be the worse for me: To which Purpose *I would take Heed to my Ways, that I sin not with my Tongue*; would guard against much speaking, false speaking, vain speaking, *&c.* Two Things especially I would propose to myself: *To abstain from all hurtful Converse;* and *to aim at something profitable therein:* To abstain from *hurtful Converse*; such as defiles the Minds of Men, or wounds Religion; intrenches upon the Honour of God, and lessens the Veneration due to sacred Things; such as is hurtful to others; to the Reputation of those that are absent, or the Charity of those that are present; as Slander, Backbiting, *&c.* I would take Care not to provoke, or unnecessarily grieve those I converse with; as by Satyr and Raillery; by exposing and insulting over their Weaknesses and Infirmities, or assuming an undue Superiority. I would here keep in Mind that Rule, 1 *Pet.* iii. 8. *Love as Brethren; be piteous, be courteous.* I would also *aim at something profitable*; and not only *let no corrupt Communication proceed out of* my *Mouth, but that which is good, to the Use of edifying, that it may administer Grace unto the Hearers,* Eph. iv. 29. *I'll speak of thy Testimonies,* says *David, before Kings, and will not be ashamed,* Psal. cxix. 46. I would not be ashamed of owning God and Religion on proper Occasions, but would watch Opportunities, when in fit Company, to introduce something of Religion, *at least in occasional Hints*;

Making ſuitable Remarks on ſuch Providences as the Converſation leads to; now and then inſerting a Word of gentle Admonition, or Reproof to a Friend, as there is Occaſion. Grant me herein, O my God! the Zeal and Prudence that is neceſſary.

6thly, I would reſolve in the Refreſhments of the Day, when I come to my ſtated Meals, to bring my Religion along with me, and ſtill be in the Fear of the Lord; to obſerve the Rules of Temperance and Sobriety; to beg a Bleſſing on my Food; return Thanks, and be ſerious in both, *Mark* viii. 6. *Acts* xxvii. 35. *Whether I eat or drink, or whatever I do, I would do all to the Glory of God.* Nor.

7thly, Would I leave Religion out of my Diverſions, but manage theſe alſo in the Fear of the Lord: To which Purpoſe I would reſolve to uſe no Diverſions, but ſuch as I may decently beg a Bleſſing upon; would be cautious in the Choice of them, and not only avoid ſuch as are in themſelves ſinful, but ſuch as are full of Snares, and don't comport with the Gravity of the Chriſtian Profeſſion: I would always uſe them with an Eye to the proper End they ſerve for, *viz.* an unbending the Mind for a time, and a Relaxation from more ſevere Buſineſs, that I may come again to it with greater Life and Spirit; I would uſe them for the Health of the Body, the refreſhing the Mind, and fitting me for the more chearful Service of God; and conſequently I would ſpend no more Time in them than theſe Ends require. And with theſe, and the like Cautions, I reckon Diverſions may not only be reconciled to Religion, and made conſiſtent with it, but made to miniſter to it, I might ſay made Exerciſes of it.

8thly, I

8thly, I would endeavour that my Thoughts, Affections and Paſſions be kept under the Influence of Religion all the Day long. *Let not thy Heart envy Sinners, but be thou in the Fear of the Lord.* Religion, or the Fear of God, will not only reſtrain from groſs, outward Acts of Sin, but ſuppreſs ſinful Deſires and Motions within. O my God! all Things are naked and open to thy Eyes; *thou ſearcheſt and knoweſt me; knoweſt my ſitting down, and riſing up, and underſtandeſt my Thoughts afar off. Thou compaſſeſt my Paths, and art acquainted with all my Ways,* Pſal. cxxxix. 1, *&c.* Help me to reverence thy Preſence: Darkneſs hideth not from thee, but the Night ſhineth as the Day; the Darkneſs and the Light are both alike to thee: What paſſes in the Darkneſs of the Mind is expoſed to thy View; thou readeſt the moſt retir'd Thoughts more certainly than others can the Actions. I would always ſet thee before me, at my right Hand; and not only ſpeak and act, but think, deſire, *&c.* as under thy Eye.

9thly, I would reſolve every Night to ſpend ſome time in ſuitable Exerciſes of Religion; to make, at leaſt, a ſhort Review of the Affairs of the Day; with ſuch Acknowledgments to God in Thankſgiving, Confeſſion, *&c.* as the Matter requires. Nor would I be content to cloſe the Day without ſome warm Devotion, and a Heart affected with what has occur'd in the Courſe of the Day.

10thly, I deſire always to commit myſelf to bed, and go to ſleep with God upon my Thoughts: To which Purpoſe, whilſt undreſſing, and preparing for Reſt, I would entertain myſelf with ſerious Reflections and Ejaculations; endeavouring to fall aſleep in the midſt of divine Soliloquies and Breathings; communing with my own Heart upon my Bed. This will probably have a good Influence upon the Imagination in Dreams; make my Reſt calm

and comfortable, and prepare me when I awake, *to be ſtill with God.*

O my Soul! intend and purſue ſuch a Courſe: 'Tis the Way of Life and Peace, is attended with Profit and Pleaſure, and has every thing in it that's recommending: Nor need the Difficulties of it diſcourage; divine Grace will help to ſurmount theſe; and indeed they are leſs than many ſubmit to in Matters of infinitely leſs Moment, and even in ſuch Purſuits as are hurtful and pernicious. What ſo great Difficulty, for Inſtance, in thinking of God in the Morning when I awake? Some Thought I muſt have; the Mind can't be idle. And why may I not think of God as well as of the World, or my Luſts? Why may I not deviſe liberal and pious Things on my Bed, as well as deviſe Miſchief on the Bed, as the Character of ſome is; or let my Thoughts run waſte, ſpend themſelves in fruitleſs Muſings? Why may not the Chriſtian, in his Converſe with others, reverently mention the Name of God, and bleſs in his Name, as well as others profanely curſe in his Name: Methinks the one ſhould be as eaſy to the Chriſtian, as the Language of Hell to the Sinner, and certainly 'tis not leſs honourable.

In ſhort, there is nothing in this Courſe but what is highly advantageous, every Way worthy of the rational Nature; tending to the Improvement, Perfection, and Comfort of it; nothing of unreaſonable Reſtraint and Confinement. *I will walk at Liberty*, ſays *David*, *for I* have ſought *thy Precepts*, Pſal. cxix. 45. It requires indeed a Gravity and Compoſure; an habitual Senſe of God upon the Mind: But this is ſo far from being irkſome, that to a Soul, in any good meaſure purified and diſentangled from the Slavery of Sin and Senſe, 'tis its Life and its Joy. Such a one does not

loſe, only *changes* his Pleaſures; only quits ſome imaginary, fantaſtick Pleaſures, for Pleaſures infinitely more refined and excellent. O my God! teach me my Duty! help me to meditate in thy Precepts, and have Reſpect unto thy Ways; to rejoice in the Way of thy Teſtimonies as much as in all Riches. *My Soul breaketh for the Longing that it hath to thy Judgment at all times. Turn away mine Eyes from beholding Vanity, and quicken me in thy Way. Shed abroad thy Love in my Heart; draw me and I ſhall run after thee:* May I ſet thee always before me, and *be in the Fear of the Lord all the Day long.*

Of CHRISTIAN *Watchfulneſs.*

REV. xvi. 15. *Bleſſed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his Garments, leſt he walk naked, and they ſee his Shame.*

Fourteenth Specimen.

WAtching, in Strictneſs, is a Property of the Body, and oppoſed to Sleeping; as applied to the Mind, it is taken in a metaphorical Senſe, and imports Attention, Care and Caution, in the Affairs of our Souls, and of Religion; and eſpecially a due Guard againſt the Enemies and Dangers that threaten us. 'Tis a Duty of univerſal Concernment, often enjoin'd by our great Lord and Maſter, *Matt.* xxiv. 42. *Matt.* xxv. 13. *Mark* xiii. 35, 36, 37. *Rev.* iii. 2, 3. 'Tis a Duty of great Extent; reaches to all Times, and all the Circumſtances of a Chriſtian. We are to be conſtantly, and every where, upon our Watch in ſome Meaſure, or we cannot be ſafe. We have many Things to watch againſt, as the World, and its various

Snares, *Luke* xxi. 34. 1 *John* ii. 15. the Devil and his Stratagems, 1 *Pet.* v. 8. againſt the Infection of evil Company, *Exod.* xxiii. 2. *Prov.* i. 10. *Prov.* v. 8. againſt our Friends, when they become Tempters, as ſometimes they do, *Mark* viii. 33. *Acts* xxi. 13. *Gal.* ii. 11. againſt our own Corruptions, eſpecially the Sins of Conſtitution, *Pſal.* xviii. 23. *Heb.* xii. 1. We have many Things to watch over, as our Hearts, Deſires, Affections, Paſſions, *Prov.* iv. 23. our Words, *Pſal.* xxxix. 1. *Pſal.* cxli. 3. our Appetites and Senſes, *Pſal.* cxli. 4. *Job* xxxi. 1. *Prov.* xxiii. 31. In theſe Things the Chriſtian's Watch muſt be employed: And how difficult, how important the Work! Aſſiſt me, O my God, by thy Grace: *Except the Lord keep the City* (unleſs he defend the Soul) *the Watchman walketh but in vain*, Pſal. cxxvii. 1.

For what Purpoſe we are to watch we are told; namely, *to keep our Garments, leſt we walk naked, and they ſee our Shame.* The Chriſtian's Graces are his Garments. Thus the Scripture repreſents them. Hence we read of being *clothed with Humility*, 1 Pet. v. 5. of the Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit; are bid to *buy white Raiment, that* we *may be clothed, and that the Shame of* our *Nakedneſs do not appear*, Rev. iii. 18. *And the King's Daughter* (i. e.) the Church, *is ſaid to be all glorious within, and to have her Cloathing of fine wrought Gold*, Pſal. xlv. 13. Theſe are our Garments; and we *keep them*, when we preſerve them in a due State, and in vigorous Exerciſe: And on the other hand, *We walk naked*, and they ſee our Shame, when the ſeveral Graces, that ſhould adorn our Life and Converſation, are ſuſpended, and left out of it; and we come forth, and appear without our Ornaments.

I might illuſtrate this by running through the ſeveral divine Graces, a Catalogue of which we have,

2 *Pet.*

2 *Pet.* i. 5, 6, 7. *Gal.* v. 22, 23. *Eph.* v. 9. *Add to your Faith Virtue, to your Virtue Knowledge,* &c. Now when the Chriſtian ſuffers preſent Things to prevail with him, and the Objects of Senſe to carry it in a Competition with the Objects of *Faith*, he appears deſtitute of *that Grace*, and is ſo far naked. When he purſues this World with a reſolute Fondneſs, through any Meaſures, and in Neglect of God, his Soul, and another World; his *Faith* is eclipſed and loſt, the great Ornament is torn from him: So when he acts cowardly in his Profeſſion, and through ſlaviſh Fear of Man, or any temporal Inconvenience, he neglects and deſerts his Duty to God, and violates Conſcience, the Grace and Ornament of *Virtue*, or Chriſtian Fortitude and Courage is laid aſide. How naked in this Reſpect did *Peter* appear, when he denied his Maſter? and how did Men ſee his Shame? *Mark* xiv. 68, 71. When he acts raſhly and unskilfully in Matters of Religion, bewrays a groſs Ignorance of the Rules and Maxims of Chriſtian Wiſdom and Prudence, laid down in the Goſpel, he wants the *Knowledge* he ſhould add to his Virtue; and ſo far is *naked*. And the ſame may be obſerv'd, with Reference to Temperance, Patience, Godlineſs, Brotherly-Kindneſs, Charity, *&c.* When he *makes Proviſion for the Fleſh, to fulfil the Luſts thereof*; and in any groſs Inſtances, violates the Laws of Sobriety, he is off his Guard, and expoſes himſelf in the filthy Guiſe of a Senſualiſt: When he frets under the Diſcipline of God; and his Paſſions break forth into a Tumult, Mutiny and Rebellion, inſtead of a calm and ſilent Submiſſion: When forgetting the great Laws of Meekneſs, Quietneſs, Brotherly-Kindneſs, and Charity, he gives Way to Hatred, Variance, Emulation, Wrath, Strife, Envyings, Bitterneſs, Clamour, and evil ſpeaking: When in-

ſtead of *all Goodneſs, Righteouſneſs and Truth*, Eph. v. 9. Selfiſhneſs, Hurtfulneſs, Injuſtice, Oppreſſion, Falſhood, Deceit, Lying prevails: Inſtead of Humility, Lowlineſs of Mind, and Modeſty, Pride, Haughtineſs, Conceit, and vain Oſtentation ſhew themſelves in his Converſe and Behaviour, then the Chriſtian *walks naked, and they ſee his Shame.*

O my Soul! how often haſt thou forgot thyſelf, let down thy Watch, and come forth in thy Nakedneſs; with the Garments of Faith, Patience, Sobriety and Meekneſs, Charity and Goodneſs, *rent and torn?* How often haſt thou wanted the Courage and Preſence of Mind that becomes the Chriſtian? How often has Cowardice and Lowneſs of Spirit betrayed thee to neglect thy Duty, and into ſinful Compliances? How often has Pride of Countenance, a haughty Look, Roughneſs and Inſolence of Behaviour diſgrac'd thee? and the Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit has been laid aſide, and that Humbleneſs of Mind forgot, which thou ſhould'ſt have put on, and conſtantly kept on? Haſt thou not been guilty of backbiting with thy Tongue, of uttering Deceit, ſpeaking great ſwelling Words of Vanity, when the Law of Kindneſs and Truth ſhould have been in thy Tongue? How often haſt thou indulged thy Paſſions and Appetites, againſt the Rules of Reaſon and Religion, thereby laying thy Honour in the Duſt! Be humbled, O my Soul! upon the Review of theſe Things, and ſet thyſelf on a ſtronger Guard for the future. *Watch and pray, that thou entereſt not into Temptation.* Lord, grant me all the bright Ornaments, the Graces of thy Spirit, and may they govern in my Heart and Life. Help me to cheriſh and improve them, live and act under their Influences always, to watch and keep my Garments, *leſt I walk naked, and they ſee my Shame.*

Of the CHRISTIAN's *Strength.*

2 COR. xii. 10. *For when I am weak, then am I ſtrong.*

Fifteenth Specimen.

NO doubt there are different Degrees of Grace in real Chriſtians: Some *are ſtrong*, others *weak*, Rom. xv. 1. Some are *Babes*, and *carnal*, others are *ſpiritual*, 1 Cor. iii. 1. *Timothy* is exhorted to *be ſtrong in the Grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus*, 2 Tim. ii. 1. The *Apoſtle* takes Notice of the *Theſſalonians*, that their *Faith grew exceedingly*, and their mutual *Charity abounded*; *ſo that* they gloried in them *for* their *Patience and Faith in all* their *Perſecution and Tribulation*, 2 Theſſ. i. 3, 4. And we are bid to *add to* our *Faith Virtue*, *to Virtue Knowledge*, *to Knowledge Temperance*, &c. that *theſe Things* being in us *and abounding*, we may *be neither barren nor unfruitful in the Knowledge of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, 2 Pet. i. 5, 6, 7, 8. Divine Graces, as they are Habits of the Mind, are capable of great Improvement, and are advanced to a much higher Pitch in ſome than in others.

Notwithſtanding, I don't think that the Chriſtian's Strength and Ability for Action, in the divine Life, ariſes *chiefly* from the Furniture and Stock of habitual Grace; but rather from the Concurrence and Aſſiſtance of the great Author of Grace. *I can do all Things*, ſays the *Apoſtle*, *through Chriſt*, *which ſtrengtheneth me*, Phil. iv. 13. Not who *hath* ſtrengthned me, by former Communications of divine Grace, but who *now ſtrengtheneth*, and conſtantly ſtrengtheneth by his Spirit, as my Occaſions require. *I laboured*, *yet not I*, *but the Grace of God that was with me*, 1 Cor. xv. 10. In ſhort,

I ſuppoſe

I ſuppoſe the Chriſtian's Strength to lie *in a ſteady, conſtant Dependence on God:* If *Peter* be ſelf-confident, notwithſtanding his Virtue, Courage and Zeal, it will ſoon appear how frail and impotent he is. *When I am weak*, ſays the *Apoſtle*, *then I am ſtrong*. He can't mean, that when he had little Grace he had much, and was ſtrong in Grace; that's a Contradiction: But his Meaning, I reckon, muſt be, that when he was in Circumſtances of greateſt Difficulty, ſurrounded with the moſt threatning Enemies and Dangers, and had the greateſt Senſe of his own Infirmity and Inability, then he found himſelf ſtrong; *ſtrong in the Lord, and in the Power of his Might*. The Caſe is the ſame with every Chriſtian, in all the eminent Trials of his Life. When he has learnt to diſtruſt himſelf, renounce all Self-confidence and Self-ſufficiency, and with a humble, believing Eye look up to Heaven, and ſet his Hope on God; *then is he ſtrong*. God ſays to him, my Grace is ſufficient for thee, my Strength is made perfect in Weakneſs: Some have compared, not unfitly, the preſumptuous Sinner to the *Hare*, that relies on her own Swiftneſs for * Safety; and the humble Chriſtian to the *Rabbit*, that, in her Danger, takes Sanctuary in the Rock. Lord! teach me the great Secret of Dependence on thyſelf: Whatever Improvements I have made in Wiſdom, or fancy I have made, I would not lean to my own Underſtanding, but truſt in the Lord with all my Heart. I would not rely on my own Reſolution or Courage, on any of the Attainments, which by thy Grace I have already made; but would conſider my Springs are in thee, and all my Sufficiency from thee: Accordingly I deſire to wait upon thee, that I may daily renew my Strength; run, and not be weary; walk, and not faint. Help me to live believing, reſigning,

* *Pedibus petit ille ſalutem.*

reſigning, depending; and the more reduced and emptied of ſelf I am, the more I diſtruſt my own Arm, the more Reaſon I have to expect the Help of thine. *When I am weak, then am I ſtrong.*

Of the Excellency of Holineſs, Obedience, and good Works.

PSAL. xlv. 13. *The King's Daughter is all glorious within; her Cloathing is of wrought Gold.*

Sixteenth Specimen.

'TIS Matter of Surprize, that any who are acquainted with their Bible, and take that for the Rule of their Religion, ſhould ſpeak ſo contemptibly as they do of Obedience and good Works: As if to recommend and preſs them was Legaliſm, and to ſtudy and practiſe them vain and needleſs. Different Reaſons, I ſuppoſe, may be aſſigned for this Humour, the depreciating Obedience, or good Works.

1ſt, Some are led into it from a miſtaken Notion of Humility; as if they might not think meanly of themſelves, without undervaluing the Grace of God; and deſpiſe themſelves for their own Deformities and Blemiſhes, without denying the Beauty and Excellency of the divine Image. In ſhort, Humility, as it reſpects this Matter, conſiſts not in low Thoughts of Holineſs and Obedience, but in a juſt Reſentment of our little Attainments therein.

2dly, Some ſeem to think a Zeal for good Works and Obedience, derogates from the Merits of Chriſt, the Compleatneſs of his Righteouſneſs; as if our Works and Obedience could ſafely ſtand in no Place, unleſs they be ſet in Chriſt's Place; and could ſignify

nify *nothing*, unleſs they ſignify *every thing*. Chriſt's Obedience and Righteouſneſs are of a diſtinct Conſideration from ours, have an higher Office and Sphere, belong to another Covenant, and ſerve different Purpoſes. He fully accompliſh'd what he undertook; his Work is finiſhed and accepted: Nor does it need, or can admit of any Supplement from us. Our Righteouſneſs is inferior and ſubordinate, but equally neceſſary in the Covenant wherein we ſtand, and for the Ends it refers to, with the perfect, unſpotted Righteouſneſs of the Mediator in his Covenant.

3dly, Others are betrayed into a Neglect and Diſparagement of Obedience, Holineſs, and good Works, from a Fancy, that an Obedience, ſo defective as theirs, is worthleſs, and will avail them nothing. They pretend they dare appear before a perfectly righteous, and holy God, in no Righteouſneſs but what is perfect; and their own Righteouſneſs being, at beſt, ſo very imperfect, they are apt to conclude it uſeleſs and worthleſs. And hence a confident Reliance on the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt, which they take to be the Faith the Goſpel requires, paſſes with them for every thing: but if by *perfect Righteouſneſs* they mean *abſolutely perfect*, 'tis certain the Angels have no ſuch Righteouſneſs: None are perfect as God is perfect. *He charges his Angels with Folly*, Job iv. 18. Every one appears before God in the State and Condition he is in. The Mediator in his proper Excellencies and Glory, the Angels in theirs, the Spirits of the juſt in theirs; which are more or leſs, according to their different Attainments. In the mean time no Creature has a perfect Righteouſneſs, nor can he appear before God in any ſuch Righteouſneſs: But if he be *truly* righteous, he is accepted of God, notwithſtanding defects: *The righteous Lord loveth Righteouſneſs,*

and

and his Countenance beholdeth the Upright, Pſal. xi. 5. He loveth all the Righteous, and that according to the Meaſure of their real Righteouſneſs and Goodneſs; and tho' none have a perfect Righteouſneſs, all good Men have ſo much Righteouſneſs (*i. e.*) Likeneſs of God, Conformity to his Nature and Will, Rectitude and Holineſs of Heart and Frame, as renders them fit Objects of his Favour and Love. Indeed Mankind having apoſtatiz'd, *all having ſinn'd, and come ſhort of the Glory of God*, Rom. iii. 23. having departed from the original Law of Righteouſneſs, the Rule of perfect innocent Nature; all need the Grace of the Mediator, and of the new Diſpenſation of Religion, eſtabliſh'd through him: His perfect Righteouſneſs is the Foundation of that Covenant in which they are, and of the Hopes they have of Acceptance with God. The moſt righteous are Sinners, and are ſaved by Mercy and *Grace, through the Redemption* that is in Chriſt, *Eph.* i. 7. God hath *choſen us, that we ſhould be holy, and without Blame before him in Love*: But as our Holineſs, in its greateſt Advances, has its Flaws and Imperfections in this Life, *he hath made us accepted in the beloved*, Eph. i. 4. 6.

Other Things might be taken Notice of as contributing to this Miſtake, about good Works and Obedience; but I reckon them all Temptations, and as ſuch would guard againſt them. I muſt give away my Bible, and change my Notion of Religion, and even of Heaven, before I can come into their Meaſures, that would repreſent good Works as unneceſſary, and Holineſs of little Worth: Certainly I may be humble and vile in my own Eyes, and yet maintain a Reverence for Holineſs and Obedience; and indeed I would therefore think myſelf vile, becauſe I have no more of it. I may reſerve

reſerve to the Lord Jeſus the Glory of his Office, and triumph in his Righteouſneſs, and yet not neglect a ſubordinate, perſonal Righteouſneſs of my own; without which I can have no Intereſt in his Righteouſneſs, or little to his Salvation: His Righteouſneſs was not deſigned to ſuperſede ours, nor muſt it be ſubſtituted in its Stead; in many Things it was the Pattern and Rule of our Righteouſneſs, and in all an Encouragement and Excitement to it. When we ſee God would not pardon the Violations of his Law, till his Son had done Honour to it by a perfect Obedience, nor receive Sinners into Favour, but upon the Atonement he made; we may be ſure he won't forgive the impenitent, nor ſave the unholy. In ſhort, Chriſt's Righteouſneſs was to make Way for ours, to encourage it, not to exclude it.

O my Soul! let nothing tempt thee to low Thoughts of that which is thy greateſt Excellency, and ſhould be thy conſtant Ambition, *viz. the Glory within, the Cloathing of wrought Gold*; Let nothing divert thee from the general comprehenſive Duty and Buſineſs of Life, *the following Holineſs, without which no Man ſhall ſee the Lord.*

There is an intrinſick Value and Goodneſs in Holineſs and Obedience; to love God with all our Heart, Soul, and Mind; to live ſoberly, righteouſly and godly in this preſent, evil World: As 'tis the great Leſſon the Goſpel teaches, ſo 'tis a Duty of unchangeable Obligation, ariſing out of the Nature and Reaſon of Things. Whilſt God is what he is, *(viz.)* a Being of infinite Perfection, and Man continues ſuch a Creature as God has made him, plac'd in ſuch Relations as he ſtands in, both towards God and his Fellow-Creatures, he's everlaſtingly obliged to all the Duties of Godlineſs, *(i. e.* to Love, Fear, Reverence, Worſhip, Truſt, and

and obey God) to live according to the Rules of Juſtice and Mercy with his Neighbour, and govern himſelf by the Laws of Sobriety, Temperance, *&c.* Theſe are Duties that have a natural Decency and Fitneſs in them, and can never ceaſe to be the Duties of reaſonable Creatures.

Nor were they ever diſpenſed with under any Diſpenſation of Religion; even the Law of Ceremonies, given by *Moſes* to the *Jews*, had many Documents of the Neceſſity of moral Holineſs and Obedience: And when the Duties of this Nature were neglected, all their Zeal for external Services became vain and ineffectual, as is evident from the Sermons of the Prophets; not to ſay that it might be Part of the Deſign of God, in appointing them ſuch numerous Rites (ſome of which, probably, they knew no other Reaſon for, but the Pleaſure of the Lawgiver) to train them up to an intire implicit Subjection to his own Will, which is the Subſtance of all Obedience. I might add their Sacrifices, as Means of Abſolution, were alſo Arguments againſt Sin, and for Obedience. The Death of the Sacrifice was an Admonition to him that brought it, concerning the Evil of Sin, and his own Deſert as a Sinner, and call'd upon him to repent and reform; to which it was alſo a Motive, as it gave him Grounds to hope for the divine Favour: *There is Forgiveneſs with thee, that thou mayeſt be feared*, Pſal. cxxx. 4. So that even this State of Religion, which ſeemed to have the leaſt of Morality in it, not only ſuppoſed and included moral Duties and Obedience, but was calculated to promote them.

And 'tis evident, even to a Demonſtration, that this alſo is the great Deſign of the Goſpel, namely, the advancing of Holineſs and Obedience. 'Tis the Deſign of Chriſt's Life, Doctrine, Miracles, Death and Sacrifice; of his Advocacy with the

Father, and of the whole Office of the Paraclete, or Spirit of God, *Eph.* v. 26, 27. *Tit.* ii. 14. *Gal.* v. 22, 23. *We are choſen, that we might be holy,* Eph. i. 4. *Called with an holy Calling,* 2 Tim. i. 9. *Are created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good Works; which God hath before ordained, that we ſhould walk in them,* Eph. ii. 10. *We are ſaved by the waſhing of Regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghoſt,* Tit. iii. 5.

* Communion with Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, *p.* 213.

"God hath appointed, ſays Dr. * *Owen,* that Holi-
"neſs ſhall be the Means, the way to that eternal
"Life, which, as in itſelf, and originally it is his
"Gift by Jeſus Chriſt; ſo with Regard to his
"Conſtitution of our Obedience, as the Means
"of attaining it, is a *Reward,* and God in beſtow-
"ing of it, a *Rewarder*; though it be neither the
"Cauſe, Matter or Condition of our Juſtification,
"yet it is the Way appointed of God for us to
"walk in, for the obtaining of Salvation: And
"therefore he that hath Hope of eternal Life, *pu-*
"*rifies himſelf as he is pure:* And none ſhall ever
"come to that End, who walketh not in that Way;
"*for without Holineſs,* 'tis impoſſible to ſee God.

In ſhort, the Scripture every where repreſents the Neceſſity of Holineſs, Obedience, and moral Righteouſneſs, comments upon its Excellency in the ſtrongeſt Terms, *Eccleſ.* xii. 13. *Iſa.* i. 16, 17, 18. *Matt.* vii. 22, 23. *Rom.* ii. 6,——12. 1 *Cor.* vi. 9, 10, 11. *Heb.* v. 9. 1 *John* iii. 7. *Rev.* xxii. 14. Indeed the whole Bible runs in this Strain; 'tis the Voice of both Teſtaments: In a Word, *Holineſs* is the Image of God reſtored, *Eph.* iv. 24. the great Ornament of our Nature, *Pſal.* xlv. 13. our Preparation for Heaven, *Matt.* v. 8. and a good Meaſure of Heaven itſelf, *Pſal.* xvii. 1, 5. *Heb.* xii. 23.

O my God! teach me thy Statutes; hide not thy Commandments from me; guide me in the Way

Way that I ſhould chuſe; may a Senſe of the Excellency of Holineſs attract my Deſires, raiſe my Eſteem, and quicken my Purſuits; and may a Senſe of my own Imperfections and Meanneſs lead me to adore the Proviſions of thy Grace; to depend on the Righteouſneſs, and plead the Merit of my Redeemer. I would do every Thing in the Name of Chriſt; believe, repent, obey, ſtill acting Faith in his Blood, applying to him as my Peace-maker, and Advocate with the Father; would live and die *with my Hand upon the Head of that glorious Victim.* This Humility and Recumbence becomes my State; 'tis thy Will and Appointment, Part of my Obedience and Righteouſneſs. Lord, form and frame me according to thy Goſpel; may I perfect Holineſs in thy Fear, *looking for the Mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt unto eternal Life.*

Of Habitual Repentance.

Isa. lvii. 15. *Thus ſays the high and lofty one, I dwell in the high and holy Place; with him alſo that is of a contrite and humble Spirit; to revive the Spirit of the humble, and to revive the Heart of the contrite one.*

Seventeenth Specimen.

Repentance, in the Theological, Scripture Senſe, is the Sinner's Return to God, and to his Duty. Sin is a Digreſſion from the Paths of God's Commandments, makes a Chaſm or Breach in the Courſe of our Obedience; Repentance brings us back, and ſets us in the Way again. There are ſeveral Adjuncts and Circumſtances of Repentance, which Men are apt to reſt in, inſtead of the thing

itſelf: Such as Confeſſion, Tears, and other Expreſſions of Humiliation; theſe often accompany Repentance, but are not Repentance; even *godly Sorrow* is ſomething diſtinct from it, as the *Apoſtle* intimates, 2 Cor. vii. 10. *It worketh Repentance.*

Beſides the *Firſt* and *Original* Repentance, as I may call it, a Repentance from dead Works; which includes a Change of Mind, and a Change of Life conſequent thereupon, and is the ſame with Converſion; there is an after, and *habitual Repentance:* The former is the Sinner's entring upon a Courſe of Religion; is one of his firſt Works, and cannot properly be repeated; *juſt Perſons need no Repentance,* Luke xv. 7. But the other *(viz.) the habitual Repentance* concerns every good Man, and will be his Duty as long as he's in a State of Sin and Imperfection; and I reckon it conſiſts in what the Scripture calls *Poverty of Spirit (viz.)* in great Lowlineſs, Humility, and Self-Abaſement; a Temper, which as it well becomes the moſt righteous Perſon upon Earth, ſo 'tis an Ornament in the Sight of God of great Price, *Matt.* v. 3. *Iſa.* lvii. 15. *Iſa.* lxvi. 2. *To this Man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite Spirit, and trembleth at my Word.* All true Chriſtians have ſomething of this Spirit, though their Attainments are different in this, as well as in other Excellencies: All are humbled and abaſed; all are poor in Spirit, and live repenting, though not alike ſo.

The Foundation of this Temper which I have choſe to call *Habitual Repentance,* is laid in the firſt humbling Work of Grace upon the Soul. *Saul* the *Phariſee* was cured of his Pride, when God touched his Heart from Heaven; not that he needed no farther Diſcipline: He was afterwards in Danger of being lifted up above Meaſure; to prevent which, he had a Thorn in the Fleſh, the Meſ-

ſenger

ſenger of Satan ſent to buffet him. The Chriſtian is at firſt humbled, reduced, and laid low, emptied of ſelf, in ſome Meaſure; but ordinarily he paſſes through a Variety of humbling Providences, appointed by God for that Purpoſe, before he is brought to a confirmed Humility. 'Tis one of the more ſublime Graces, notwithſtanding its Name; what belongs to Chriſtians of the higheſt Form in Religion, and is the Reſult of much Experience.

It ariſes from a nearer View of the divine Excellency, *Job* xlii. 5, 6. from a Conſideration of the Purity and Perfection of the divine Law, *Rom.* vii. 14. from the Senſe the Chriſtian has of his own Vileneſs, Meanneſs and Unworthineſs, when he compares himſelf with God, the Purity of his Nature, and of his Law: Such Infirmities as others overlook, often throw him into a Poſture of the deepeſt Abaſement; as the Motions of Pride, Envy, Vanity, Uncharitableneſs, Want of Devotion in divine Worſhip, diſorderly Affections, ungovern'd Paſſions, *&c.* It ariſes from a Remembrance of former Sins; the Chriſtian frequently returns to theſe in his Thoughts, and drops a Tear over them. *I was a Blaſphemer*, ſays the *Apoſtle*, *a Perſecutor, and injurious:* Hereupon, though he had obtain'd Mercy, he ſtiles himſelf *the chief of Sinners*, 1 Tim. i. 13, 15. So *David*, though God *had put away his Sin*, and told him he *ſhould not die*, 2 Sam. xii. 13. yet he himſelf leaves it on Record in a Penitential Pſalm (*Pſal.* li.) which, no queſtion, was often the Subject of a humbling Meditation to him. In a Word, the Chriſtian falls ſo much ſhort of what he would be and do, and of what he purpoſes and propoſes to himſelf, that the Conſideration thereof exceedingly humbles him: He aims high, has great Things in View; intire Conqueſt over his Corruptions, a conſtant Recti-

tude of Heart and Frame, a Readineſs to every good Work; a Diſpoſition and Ability for all Duties, both towards God and Man: But alas! how far does he drop ſhort? How often does he fall in the Dirt? *He finds a Law in his Members warring againſt the Law of his Mind; the Fleſh luſting againſt the Spirit, ſo that he cannot do the Things he would:* And this abaſes him, lays him low, and keeps him low. Hence he crys out, *O wretched Man, who ſhall deliver me!* He can't reach the Mark he aims at; ſo far from it, that he thinks he has done as good as nothing; and therefore, *forgetting the Things that are behind*, looking upon paſt Attainments as of little Account, he preſſes forward.

And oh! how ſuitable ſuch a Temper to the preſent State of Things with Chriſtians! even the beſt of them? how ſuitable to myſelf in particular, compaſs'd about with ſo many Infirmities? Lord, grant me ſuch a Sight of myſelf, as may effectually humble me; may I not think myſelf increaſed in Goods, to be rich, and have need of nothing, when I am poor and miſerable, and blind, and naked: Help me to anoint my Eyes with Eye-ſalve, that I may ſee. I am indeed poor; may I have a true Senſe of it, and a Poverty of Spirit, a Contrition of Heart anſwerable to my Caſe.

Habitual Repentance, or the contrite Spirit, where it prevails, will not be concealed, but has many Ways of Expreſſion; particularly it ſhews itſelf in Strains of great Self-Abaſement. *I am carnal*, ſays the *Apoſtle*, Rom. vii. 14. *The chief of Sinners*, 1 Tim. i. 15. *Leſs than the leaſt of all Saints*, Eph. iii. 8. And as if he was not yet low enough; we find him elſewhere humbling himſelf even to Annihilation, 2 *Cor.* xii. 11. Pity a poor Worm and Devil. Lord, here's a poor Hell-hound and Devil lying at thy Foot; Expreſſions, frequent in the

the Devotions of ſome Penitents I have read of: And though ſuch Forms, in themſelves, are no certain Tokens of Humility; yet, when the inward Frame anſwers them, as it ſometimes exceeds them, they have an Excellency in them. Thou art Heaven, but I am Hell, ſays the Martyr.

It ſhews itſelf in a Meekneſs and quiet Submiſſion, not only under the afflicting Hand of God, but under the oppreſſing, injurious Hand of Man. The humble Chriſtian, that daily lays himſelf in the Duſt, can bear it when others do ſo too.

It ſhews itſelf in admiring Thoughts of the divine Bounty, both in common Providence and in ſpecial Inſtances of Favour. *I am not worthy of the leaſt of all thy Mercies, thou haſt ſhewed unto thy Servant*, Gen. xxxii. 10. *Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my Houſe, that thou haſt brought me hitherto?* 1 Chron. xvii. 16. And ſays the *Apoſtle* to me, *who am leſs than the leaſt of all Saints, is this Grace given, that I ſhould preach among the Gentiles the unſearchable Riches of Chriſt*, Eph. iii. 8. He that's humble, and of a contrite Spirit, ſets another Value upon Mercies than Pride will agree to: When God puniſhes, he owns 'tis leſs than Sin deſerves; and when he bleſſes, he celebrates Grace in it; rich, ſovereign Grace, Grace that he wants a Name for, ſufficient to expreſs the Senſe he has of the Thing.

It ſhews itſelf in Worſhip, and in the Manner of the Chriſtian's Addreſſes to God. Words can but faintly repreſent the Abaſement and Humility with which Men of this Spirit approach in the moſt High: They are all *Publicans* in this reſpect, *ſtanding afar off, ſmiting on the Breaſt*, and crying, *God be merciful to* us *Sinners*, Luke xviii. 13. And ſometimes the divine Paſſion lays them proſtrate on the Face, and vents itſelf in a Flood of Tears. *They will not lift up ſo much as their Eyes to Heaven.* It

was not only the Language of his own Heart, but that of many others, which a * devout Perſon expreſſes, in a Letter to his Friend; and as it contains the Subſtance of what I have been ſaying, I ſhall here ſubjoin it; "I have nothing to ſay of Affairs private or publick, and to ſtrike up to Diſcourſes of Devotion; alas! what is here to be ſaid, but what you ſufficiently know, and daily think? And I am beaten back, if I had a Mind to ſpeak of ſuch Things, by the Senſe of ſo great Deficiency, in doing thoſe Things that the moſt ignorant among Chriſtians cannot but know. Inſtead of all fine Notions I fly to Κύριε ἐλέησον, Χριστὲ ἐλέησον; Lord have Mercy. I think them the greateſt Heroes, and moſt excellent Perſons in the World, that attain to high Degrees of pure Contemplation and divine Love: But next to theſe them that, in aſpiring to that, and falling ſhort of it, fall down into deep Humility and Self-contempt. And I believe that they who ſink loweſt into that Deep, ſtand neareſt to Advancement to thoſe other Heights; for that great King, who is the Fountain of Honour, has given us this Character of himſelf, that he reſiſteth the Proud, but gives Grace to the humble. Farewel, my dear Friend, and be ſo charitable as ſometimes, in your Addreſſes upwards, to remember a poor Caitiff, who no Day forgets you."

* Biſhop *Leighton.*

It ſhews itſelf in frequent, ſolemn Confeſſions and Acknowledgments of Sin, in which the Heart and Life is laid open, and all the Vileneſs thereof inlarged upon in Strains of Humiliation, that ſome Chriſtians underſtand; but no Words can interpret to Strangers and the Unexperienc'd.

It ſhews itſelf in an habitual Gravity and Compoſure of Mind: Indeed there is more or leſs of

this, according to Perſons natural or acquir'd Tempers. Nor muſt it be thought that the Contrition and Humility I am ſpeaking of, excludes Chearfulneſs and Rejoicing; as in the midſt of Mirth the Heart of the Sinner is often ſad; ſo in the midſt of this Seriouſneſs, Sedateneſs and Gravity, there's often a *Joy unſpeakable, and full of Glory:* However, 'tis certain ſuch a Temper excludes Frothineſs and Levity, and will ordinarily form the Converſe, Deportment, and even Countenance into a decent Gravity. 'Tis ſaid of Biſhop *Leighton*, that thoſe who knew him moſt and longeſt declar'd, that in a Courſe of many Years Acquaintance, they ſcarce ever ſaw him once out of that deeply ſerious Frame, in which they themſelves wiſh'd to be found in their laſt Minutes: This was extraordinary; but other Chriſtians, according to the Degree of their Humility and Contrition, know ſomething of the like Temper.

It ſhews itſelf in a Wearineſs of this World, as a State of ſo much Vanity; ſuch low Attainments, ſuch great and frequent Diſappointments in the beſt Purſuits: Where there is a conſtant Warfare, and yet comparatively little Victory and Succeſs, ardent Breathings after God and Heaven, and yet a Clog, a dead Weight at the Foot drawing down the aſpiring Soul. This, whilſt it humbles, inflames the Deſire, and makes the Chriſtian groan for Deliverance, *Rom.* vii. 24. " * I think I * Biſhop " have given up, ſaith one, with the contemptible *Leighton.* " Deſires and Deſigns of this preſent World; and " muſt have either ſomething beyond them all, or " nothing at all: And though this baſe Clod of " Earth ſtill depreſſes me, I am glad that becauſe " it does ſo, I loath and deſpiſe it." And in another Letter, " I find daily more and more Reaſon " without me, and within me yet much more, to

" pant

" pant and long to be gone: *Hei, hei mihi, quia* " *prolongatus eſt incolatus meus.* I am grown ex- " ceeding reſtif to Writing and to Speaking, yea, " almoſt to Thinking, when I think what doth " it do, and withal how cloudy our cleareſt " Thoughts are; but I think again, what other " can we do, till the Day break, and the Shadows " flee away: As one that lieth awake in the Night " muſt be thinking; and one Thought that will " likely oftneſt return, when by all the other he " finds little Relief, is, when will it be * Day." Oh! when, when will it be Day, ſays the humble, contrite Chriſtian, mourning under the Darkneſs and Coldneſs of preſent Night?

O my

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* I have taken Liberty to inſert ſeveral Paſſages from the Letters of this great and divine Man; moſt of them are pertinent to my Purpoſe, and all of them breath an uncommon Spirit of Devotion. Had more of his Letters been preſerved, they would have been a good Supplement to the Account Biſhop *Burnet* has given of him in his late Hiſtory, and might have furniſh'd Materials for a Narrative of a devout Life, which would have been entertaining to many: But as theſe few Fragments will not be ſufficient for ſuch a Purpoſe, I thought fit to take this Way to preſerve them. The Reader will excuſe me if I add a few Paſſages more, very much in the ſame Strain, with what I have already mentioned. The truly great Man, it ſeems, thought himſelf neither fit to write nor ſpeak, ſo profound was his Humility; and therefore took Care, as far as he could, that nothing of his ſhould remain; but I am perſuaded few thought ſo beſides himſelf; but rather will think it Pity that any thing he ſpoke or wrote ſhould be loſt. " I be- " lieve, ſays he to his Correſpondent, you carry about you " every where that Indifferency to external Events, and that " abſolute Confidence in the ſupream Hand that orders them, " which is the great Principle of Peace and Calmneſs of Mind, " amidſt the Fluctuations of human Affairs." And in another Letter, when he was deliberating about accepting a Biſhoprick, as I conjecture, he thus writes; " One Comfort I " have, that in what is preſſed on me, there is the leaſt of my

" own

O my Soul! ſtudy and pray for more of this divine Temper; a Humility and Abaſement that anſwers the Lowneſs and Meanneſs of thy State. I deſire to remember what once I was, *when a Child of Wrath, a Veſſel fitted for Deſtruction:* I deſire to retain a conſtant Senſe of what I ſtill am, a Maſs of Folly, Impurity and Sin; to be proud of ſuch a Heart, or *with ſuch a Heart*, is ſhameful Stupidity. I deſire to remember my more remarkable Failings and Follies, particularly in ſuch a Scene of Life, and at ſuch a Time when——how often have I acted a Part, more worthy a Brute than a Man: For Inſtance—— O Wretch! ſo ignorant and fooliſh was I, I was as a Beaſt before thee; but though

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" own Choice, yea, on the contrary, the ſtrongeſt Averſion that " ever I had in any thing in all my Life. The Truth is, I am " yet importuning and ſtruggling for a Liberation, and look " upward for it; but whatever be the Iſſue, I look beyond " it, and this weary, wretched Life, through which the Hand " I have reſigned to, I truſt will lead me, in Paths of his " own chuſing, and ſo I may pleaſe him I am ſatisfied. This " Word I will add, that as there has been nothing of my " Choice in the Thing, ſo I undergo it, if it muſt be, as a " Mortification, and that greater than a Cell and Hair Cloth; " and whether any will believe me, or no, I am not careful." He adds, on another Occaſion, " Your Love of Devotion " and Holineſs, I wholly agree with, and do really prefer the " Study of it to all other Studies; yea, I deſire humbly to " bleſs his Name, and kiſs his gracious Hand, that hath de- " livered me from the painful Purſuit of what we call Learn- " ing, and from the fooliſh Pleaſure of venting any little of " it that I have. I write it on my Books and wiſh it en- " graven on my Heart, Οὐκ ἔκρινα τοῦ εἰδέναι, &c. *I determi-* " *ned to know nothing, but Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucified.*" Another of his Letters runs thus; " Some Days ago I re- " ceived ſome Lines from you, and they were very welcome; " for I know no better News can come from any Corner of " the Earth, than of a Soul attempting to overcome the World " and its own Fleſh, and in any Degree prevailing, and re-

" ſolving

though I have been exceeding vile, God has been exceeding gracious: How kind, how tender the Courſe of his Providence towards me? How many, how great his Salvations? Hell was my Due, and had been my Portion, had he not reſcued me. O my God! what ſhall I render? In Heaven I ſhall praiſe thee! I ſhall caſt down my Crown before the Throne, ſaying, thou art worthy, not I. *Grace, Grace* will be my Song for ever there; and if there be one Choir of Saints employed in Notes of greater Abaſement than the reſt, ſurely I ſhall take my Place among them. Oh! may I arrive ſafe out of this

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" ſolving ſtill onwards. All the Projects and Conqueſts in " the World are not to be named with it. Oh! what a " Wearineſs is it to live amongſt Men, and find ſo few Men; " and amongſt Chriſtians, and find ſo few Chriſtians; ſo " much Talk, and ſo little Action; Religion turned almoſt " to a tune and Air of Words; and amidſt all our pretty " Diſcourſes puſillanimous and baſe, and ſo eaſily dragged in- " to the Mire; ſelf and Fleſh, Pride and Paſſion domineer- " ing, while we ſpeak of being in Chriſt and cloathed with " him, and believe it, becauſe we ſpeak it ſo often, and ſo " confidently. Well, I know you are not willing to be thus " gull'd; and having ſome Glances of the Beauty of Holineſs, " aim no lower than Perfection, which in the End we hope " to attain: And in the mean while, the ſmalleſt Advances to- " wards it are more worth than Crowns and Scepters. I be- " lieve you often think on thoſe Words of the bleſſed Cham- " pion *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* ix. 24, 25, *&c.* There is a noble Gueſt " within us. Oh! let all our Buſineſs be to entertain him " honourably, and to live in celeſtial Love within; that will " make all Things without very contemptible in our Eyes. I " ſhould rave on, did I not ſtop myſelf, it falling out well " too for that, to be hard upon the Poſt Hour, ere I thought " of writing: Therefore good Night is all I add; for what- " ſoever Hour it comes to your Hand, I believe you are as " ſenſible as I, that it is ſtill Night; but the Comfort is, it " is drawing towards that bright Morning that ſhall make a- " mends.

Your weary Fellow-Pilgrim, *&c.*

this Tribulation, and waſh my Garments in the Blood of the Lamb. In the mean time make me humble, and take thy own wiſe Methods with me to keep me ſo; *I would live and die repenting*, only grant me thy Countenance and Favour: Thou haſt ſaid to this Man thou wilt look, even to him *that is poor, and of a contrite Spirit, be it unto thy Servant according to thy Word.*

CHRIST, *the* CHRISTIAN'S *Maſter.*

MATT. xxiii. 8. *One is your Maſter, even Chriſt.*

Eighteenth Specimen.

SUCH has been the Veneration ſome have paid their Teachers, that they reſign'd themſelves abſolutely to their Dictates, and followed them, even with a Slavery of Underſtanding. It was the Advice of the famous *Gamaliel*, that the ignorant ſhould get themſelves *Rabbi's*, that they might no longer doubt of any thing. In the School of *Pythagoras*, his Authority was abſolute, *ipſe dixit*, the Maſter hath ſaid it, put an End to all farther Debates among his Diſciples: They acquieſced in his Word as in an Oracle *, and ask'd no farther Queſtions.

* *Ælian vari. Hiſt.* Lib. IV. c. 17.

How much more Reaſon has the Chriſtian for this Subjection to his great Maſter, who has all thoſe Qualifications that demand Reverence and Compliance? They were weak and fallible Men, and often blunder'd in the Dark: *He is a Teacher come from God*, John iii. 2. fully acquainted with the Father's Will, with the whole Syſtem of divine Doctrines, and with every thing that concerns our Salvation: He lay *in the Boſom of the Father*, and *hath* revealed *him*, John i. 18. John vii. 16.

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is infallible in his Doctrine; he received *not the Spirit by Measure,* John iii. 34. a *faithful* Messenger to the Church, *Rev.* i. 5. cloathed with the highest Authority, *Matt.* xxviii. 18, 19, 20. *Matt.* xvii. 5. *John* vi. 27.

O my Soul! resign to *the Master:* Thou may'st safely receive his Dictates, and shalt not be misled by them; and this thy Profession, as a Christian, obliges thee to: Thou wast in thy Baptism placed at his Feet, in the Condition of a Student and Learner in his Doctrines and Laws; and upon thy Fidelity herein thy everlasting Welfare dependeth. *Baptism saveth; not the putting away the Filth of the Flesh, but the answer of a good Conscience towards God,* 1 Pet. iii. 21. or as some Criticks understand it, *the Interrogation, the Question* of a *good Conscience.* "It may, I suppose, more regularly be render'd, "says Dr. * *Hammond,* the Question, or Address "of a good Conscience to God; when the true "penitent Believer comes to him as to the Ora"cle, to inquire of him for the whole future Life, "with a *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* Or, "*Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal Life?* "applying himself to God for his Direction of "all his future Actions, and that with a sincere, "upright Conscience, resolving firmly to do what "is there requir'd of him; which Resolution of "universal, sincere Obedience is that, which is "here set opposite to the washing of the Flesh, "and rinsing away the Sullage of it with Water, "which is but the Ceremony that signified that "other, and was not to be thought to avail any, "but those who performed what was signified by "it; any more than the Circumcision of a *Jew* "without the inward Purity." As I am baptiz'd into Christ, and in his Name, I have solemnly taken him for my Teacher, Master, and Lord, and put

*On *Rom.* x. 20.

put myſelf under his Government; and ſo far only as I am ſubject to him, and follow him, I am a Chriſtian: Reſign, O my Soul! to his Conduct without Reſerve; an implicit Obedience here is thy Duty, thy Honour and Safety.

Reſolve therefore to own him *as thy Maſter*: One is your Maſter, even Chriſt. Don't, under a Pretence of having no Maſter on Earth, neglect alſo the Maſter in Heaven; and ſo render thyſelf lawleſs, having no Rule but thy own Will, Humour, or Luſt.

Own him as thy *only Maſter*; *hear ye him*, Matt. xvii. 5. him, and him alone; none in Oppoſition to him, or in Neglect of him. The Office of other Teachers is to help me to underſtand the Doctrines of my Maſter, but not to dictate to me in his Stead: *He is the Author and Finiſher of our Faith*, Heb. xii. 2. His Authority muſt make and bound our Creeds; and therefore we are to look unto him, look off others unto him, as the Word may ſignify, *i. e.* when they could ſet up an Authority of their own.

Own him as thy Maſter *in all Things*. Tho' thou may'ſt not fully underſtand ſome of his Doctrines; as how the Three Perſons in the bleſſed Trinity are diſtinguiſh'd, and how united: Mayeſt not underſtand the full Myſtery of the Perſon of Chriſt, the Manner, nor all the Ends of the Incarnation, the preciſe Nature of the Reſurrection-Body, *&c. Ipſe dixit*, he hath reveal'd theſe Things, and the Authority of the Teacher ſufficient to determine thy Faith; he hath ſaid it, acquieſce therein without Cavilling; only don't pretend to be wiſe above what is written, nor to know and believe farther than he has revealed: embrace all his Doctrines and Inſtitutions, his Sacraments, the Miniſtry he has appointed for the Service of his Church: As he

has given *Paſtors and Teachers for the perfecting of the Saints, for the Work of the Miniſtry, for the edifying of the Body of Chriſt*, Eph. iv. 11, 12. Theſe I would thankfully receive and be ſubject to, in Obedience to him, whilſt they act in his Name, and purſue the great Ends of their Office; nor indeed can I truly call him Maſter, if I neglect any of his Appointments, or deſpiſe his Officers and Servants. Some that ſeem to have no Buſineſs with the Church of Chriſt, with the Ordinances and Miniſters of Chriſt, yet factiouſly and vainly pretend they are of Chriſt, 1 *Cor.* i. 12. ſubmit to him in all his Preſcriptions and Laws. The Bible is the Chriſtian's Inſtitutes; the New Teſtament particularly, his Book of Leſſons. Endeavour, O my Soul! to learn theſe, all of them, and more perfectly; and as they refer to Practice, and are deſigned to govern Heart and Life, ſtudy and apply them for that Purpoſe; bring thy Thoughts, Affections, Deſires, thy Words and Actions, civil and religious, to the Meaſure and Standard of the Goſpel, ſubmitting them to the Correction thereof, 2 *Tim.* iii. 16. A Text of Scripture, importing this or that Duty, or ſtanding againſt this or that Practice, ſhould be of the ſame Authority with a Chriſtian, as a Statute of the Realm with a Lawyer, and be pleaded by Chriſtians with one another, with like Authority.

O my God! grant me the true Chriſtian Temper; influence my Mind to the Regard, Reverence, abſolute Submiſſion and Subjection that is due to my great Maſter; may his Word be Reaſon enough for my Faith and Practice; may his Will reſtrain, controul and govern me in all Things. I would deny myſelf, becauſe *ipſe dixit*, he hath enjoin'd it; crucify the Fleſh with the Affections and Luſts; cut off the Right Hand, pluck out the Right Eye, becauſe

becauſe *ipſe dixit*, he has made this my Duty, and declared it neceſſary to my Salvation: I would be humble, meek, lowly, live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent World; love my Enemies, bleſs them that curſe me, do Good to them that hate me, and pray for them which deſpitefully uſe me, becauſe *ipſe dixit*, this is the Doctrine and Law of my great Maſter. Oh! for a Heart more filled with Love and Loyalty to him: Help me, Lord, to ſit at his Feet, receiving his Commands here, and waiting for his Salvation hereafter.

Of reſolute VIRTUE.

1 COR. xv. 58. *Be ye unmoveable in the Work of the Lord.*

Nineteenth Specimen.

THE great Care and Buſineſs of a Chriſtian is to approve himſelf to God; and when this governs all his Actions, influences all his Deſigns, eſpecially ſuch as are of moſt Importance, and directs all his Motions and Steps; when having fixed this as his End, he holds on in a ſteady Courſe with his Eye upon it, and does not warp or turn aſide; he then acts like himſelf, becoming his Character and Profeſſion. Thus it was with the Apoſtle, *Acts* xx. 24. *Acts* xxiv. 16. 2 *Cor.* v. 9. Lord, may this be my Attainment! let nothing divert me from my Duty; help me to hold on my Way through all Diſcouragements, and ſacrifice every thing for a good Conſcience.

In order to this it will be neceſſary, that I be well inform'd concerning my Duty; if I be ignorant or doubting; have not prov'd what is that

good, and acceptable, and perfect Will of God; have no clear Apprehenſions of what is juſt, decent, and becoming me in every Inſtance; but am weak in the Faith, and a Child in Underſtanding, neither know Chriſtian Duty, nor Chriſtian Liberty; I ſhall be toſs'd too and fro with every Wind of Temptation, and muſt often ſtand ſtill, look to the Motions of others, and ſo become a Captive to the Humours, Fancies, and Follies of Men.

I muſt be willing to undergo, not only the Cenſure of the unthinking, heedleſs Part of Mankind, but ſometimes of the more ſerious, and even of my Friends; and it may be, muſt ſtand alone in the Way of my Duty, 2 *Tim.* iv. 16, 17. In which Caſe I would conſider, that good Men are not my Rule, they are ſometimes off their Guard, are unſteady, weak, paſſionate and ſelfiſh: 'Tis a poor Argument, this is the Opinion or Practice of ſuch and ſuch, *and they are good Men.* That may be true; and yet he that will always take Meaſures from them, will frequently plunge himſelf in the Dirt. When *Peter* was to be blamed, *Paul* thought it his Duty to withſtand him to the Face; and had *Barnabas* done ſo too, he had not been carried away with his Diſſimulation, *Gal.* ii. 11, 13. Help me, O my God, to ſet myſelf on as ſtrong a Watch as poſſible here: If wiſe and good Men come to me with a cloven Foot, I would ſay, *get thee behind me, Satan.*

I muſt be mortified to Applauſe and maintain low Thoughts, and a ſort of a Contempt of the Opinions of others concerning me, *i. e.* in Compariſon of the Teſtimony and Approbation of God and my own Conſcience; muſt *ſeek the Honour that cometh from God only*, John v. 44. eſteeming it a ſmall thing to be judged of Man's Judgment. The Breath that endeavours to blaſt me, and that which

extols me, both will ſhortly be ſtopped; and as neither can affect my future State, they ſhould not divert me from my preſent Duties. " He is not juſt " that will not be juſt without Praiſe; but he is a " righteous Man that does Juſtice, when to do ſo " is made infamous: and he is a wiſe Man who " is delighted with an *ill Name* that is *well gotten* Sen. Ep. 113. Oh! may I always conſider, that every Man ſtandeth or falleth to his own Maſter, and accordingly keep my Eye to my great Maſter's Hand, conſtantly ſaying, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?*

I muſt get the World under Feet, be crucified to the World, and the World to me; looking down upon preſent Things with a generous Contempt, as ſcarce worthy of a ſerious, ſollicitous Thought, accounting no Intereſt conſiderable or important, but what reſpects another World and State. Oh! may it be thus with me: I ſhall ever be immoveable in the Work of the Lord; ſteady and reſolute in my Duty, till this World is in a great Meaſure depriv'd of the Power of tempting me; and I am prepared to ſuffer the Loſs of all Things, and count them but Dung, that I may win Chriſt.

I muſt daily and often look up to Heaven for Help; not only invigorate and ſtrengthen my Reſolutions by proper Conſiderations and Reflections, but wait on God for the renewing of my Strength, by the Supply of his Spirit.

I muſt live within View of Eternity, look beyond this Moment and Inch of Time, and conſider all the Affairs and Intereſts of it as little, low, and nothing, compared with an immenſe Eternity juſt ready to take place.

O my God! raiſe my Mind to this divine Pitch; as thou haſt called me to thy Kingdom and Glory by Jeſus Chriſt, make me perfect, ſettle, eſtabliſh, ſtrengthen me; help me to *add to my Faith Virtue*, to act with a ſuitable Courage and Firmneſs in the Chriſtian Profeſſion; if Afflictions and Tribulations ariſe becauſe of the Word and my Duty: Should I have Trial of cruel Mockings, moreover of Bonds and Impriſonments; ſuffer the Scourge and Striſe of Tongues; may I be able to ſay, *none of theſe Things move me, neither count I my Life dear, ſo I may finiſh my Courſe with Joy:* And as the good Man did to the threatning Empreſs, *nil niſi Peccatum timeo*, I fear nothing but Sin; fortify me both againſt the Smiles and Frowns of this World; *if Sinners entice*, may I *not conſent*; if Enemies threaten, and Friends allure, may I not conſent; but ſtill look above all, beyond all, ſetting the Lord always before me, conſidering him as at my right Hand *obſerving* me; may I find him there *aſſiſting*, conducting and ſupporting me.

Of the Improvement of TIME.

Twentieth Speeimen.

THE due Improvement of Time is a Matter of the utmoſt Conſequence. I have many Arguments to preſs upon me Caution and Care in this great point of Religion. Time is ſhort, uncertain, continually paſſing away, cannot be recalled; and which ought to have no ſmall Weight with me, Time, or the Space allowed me in this World, is my Day of Grace and Trial: If I loſe my Time, I loſe Eternity; If I loſe Part of it, even that is an eternal Loſs, in the Conſequences of it; a Day loſt on Earth is an exceeding Loſs,

may I not ſay an Age loſt in Heaven! As a Man ſoweth, ſo ſhall he reap; *he that ſoweth ſparingly, ſhall reap ſparingly; and he that ſoweth plentifully, ſhall reap accordingly:* Now is my Seed Time, and Opportunity of Improvement for a future State; the more therefore I fill up my Time with Duty, and ſuch Work as relates to another World, the fuller Harveſt of Joy and Bleſſedneſs I ſhall have there. Help me, O my God! to believe this, and to live for Eternity; ſo to redeem and husband my Time, that my Review of it at Death, and my Account of it after Death, may be with Joy, and not with Grief, for that will be unprofitable for me.

In order to this I would propoſe to myſelf the following Expedients and Helps. (1ſt,) I would endeavour to get my Mind poſſeſs'd and affected with a juſt Senſe of the narrow Bounds and ſhort Limits of my Life, and of that Time which may be properly reckon'd to Life: And here ſome ſuch Computation as this may not be impertinent. I'll allow threeſcore and ten Years for the Life of Man, it may be more, or it may be leſs, but that's the common Period; if any ſurvive it, they can ſcarce be ſaid to live, but languiſh and die, ſinking under the Burdens of decaying Nature: Out of this Sum I muſt make a Deduction for Infancy and Childhood, which can't be well leſs than ſixteen Years: Few comparatively begin to live to any good Purpoſe before that Age, and moſt not till long after; and this will reduce the threeſcore and ten to fifty four. Again, one third of that muſt be allow'd for Sleep, in which all Action and Life, is, as it were, ſuſpended, which ſinks to thirty ſix: And of this I am afraid moſt People will be found to trifle away a fourth Part; that is, of the ſixteen Hours which remain for Action or Life every Day, not above twelve of them are employed in the pro-

per Buſineſs of Life; with ſome I know it is better, but with the Generality not near ſo well; and this brings down the Account to twenty ſeven Years, that's all the Time that the aged Perſon of ſeventy can, ſtrictly ſpeaking, be ſuppoſed to live, according to a very modeſt Computation; though he ſhould be one of them that began early to improve his Time, and has been conſtant in doing it: And how much of my ſeventy Years is already gone? How much of the twenty ſeven, according to the Deduction made, has been waſted by immoderate Sleep, unneceſſary Viſits, Diverſions, Recreations, Sauntring and Idleneſs? And upon the whole, to what a narrow Scantling is Life reduced! Conſider this, O my Soul! and be awakened; be up, and doing; trifle no more; work whilſt it is Day. *Lord, teach me ſo to number my Days, that I may apply my Heart unto Wiſdom.*

2dly, I would endeavour to offer up, and conſecrate all my Time to God, and endeavour that it be ſacred to him. By this Means I may extend the former Calculation, retrieve the Time that would otherwiſe be loſt, and make all my *Duration* properly *Life*, whilſt I eat and drink, ſleep, trade, and do all *to the Glory of God*, managing all according to the Rules he hath ſet, aiming at him, and being ſollicitous to pleaſe him in all. Thus common Actions will receive a religious Stamp, and be a Sort of Worſhip to God. " * God hath not only " permitted us to ſerve the Neceſſities of our Na- " ture, but hath made them to become Parts of " our Duty; ſo that if we, by directing theſe " Actions to the Glory of God, intend them as " Inſtruments to continue our Perſons in his Ser- " vice, he, by adopting them into Religion, may " turn them into Grace, and accept our natural " Actions as Actions of Religion. God is pleaſed

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* *Taylor's* Holy Living, *p.* 3.

" to eſteem it for a Part of his Service, if we eat " or drink, ſo it be done temperately, and may " beſt preſerve our Health, (and with this higher " and farther View, that our Health may enable " our Services towards him). And there is no one " Minute of our Lives, after we are come to the " Uſe of Reaſon, but we are, or may be doing " the Work of God, even then, when we moſt " of all ſerve ourſelves." Teach me, O Lord, this divine Art! May my natural Actions and common Buſineſs have *Holineſs to the Lord* upon them; and my whole Time and Life employed as a ſacred devoted Thing.

3dly, I reſolve to watch againſt ſuch Things as would rob me of my Time; would take Care particularly, that I don't waſte it in Bed by exceſſive, unneceſſary Sleep; would take Care of my firſt Thoughts and firſt Minutes, that theſe be well employed; the Loſs of theſe is often of bad Conſequence. I would guard againſt Idleneſs, living without ſuitable Buſineſs; againſt Slothfulneſs in Buſineſs; againſt immoderate Buſineſs and foreign Buſineſs: I may loſe my Time and Life, though I be buſy, if that Buſineſs be out of my proper Calling, and the Way and Method of Service Providence has appointed me; would guard againſt unprofitable Viſits, Diverſions, Pleaſures, *&c.* ſpending no more of my Time in theſe Things than the End of them allows and requires.

4thly, I propoſe to divide the Time of every Day, allotting a fit Proportion to the ſeveral Buſineſſes thereof. 'Twas the Practice of a pious Chriſtian, to diſtribute his twenty four Hours into three Parts, allowing one Part, or eight Hours for eating, drinking, ſleeping, Company and Diverſions; another Part for the Work of his particular Calling in the World; and another third Part, or eight

Hours, for the ſpecial and immediate Service of God and Religion *(viz.)* Reading, Meditation, Prayer, *&c.* 'Tis ſaid of *Grotius*, who ſpent his Days in an inſatiable Purſuit of human Learning, that when he lay on his Death-Bed, he wiſh'd himſelf in the Stead of his devout Neighbour above referr'd to, and at the ſame time paſſed a Cenſure on his own Life, crying out, *heu Vitam perdidi operoſe nihil agendo*; I have waſted my Life in laborious trifling. I would endeavour to act with Caution in this Matter; no one Buſineſs ought to ingroſs all my Time, nor encroach upon the juſt Demands of another: And though the Diviſion I have mention'd may not ſuit me, nor would I be ſcrupulouſly nice in ſuch Matters, yet ſome Care is due here; and the more exact and prudent I am in my Rules, and ſteady in the Purſuit of them, the better I ſhall improve my Time. So many Hours I would allow for Sleeping, Refreſhment, Diverſion and Company; ſo many for the Duties of my Calling; ſo many for Devotion; that is, ſuch a Proportion to each, as upon a due Conſideration of my Affairs and Circumſtances I find convenient; and I would always reſolve to leave ſome Time every Day for the Affairs of my Soul and Eternity, and not let the Shop encroach on the Cloſet, at leaſt not keep me out of it.

5thly, I would endeavour, with the greateſt Diligence and Care, to improve ſuch Portions of my Time as are ſet apart for, and appropriated to the Work of Religion; as my daily Hours of Devotion, Faſt or Thankſgiving Days, and every Lord's-Day. I would exclude the World wholly out of this Time, and make the beſt Uſe I can of it for another World. Lord, help me by thy Grace.

6thly, I would be careful not to loſe my more looſe and leiſure Hours, in the Intervals of Buſi-

neſs

neſs or ſolemn Devotion; and accordingly would ſet myſelf to ſave as much of this Time as I can, intermixing ſomething of Religion, religious Diſcourſe, or at leaſt religious Thoughts with my Company, Diverſions, *&c.* "Betwixt the more "ſtated Employments, and more important Oc- "currences of human Life, ſays the excellent Mr. "* *Boyle*, there uſually happen to be interpoſed "certain Intervals of Time, which though they "are wont to be neglected, as being ſingly, or "within the Compaſs of one Day, inconſider- "able, yet in a Man's whole Life amount to no "contemptible Portion of it: Now theſe uncer- "tain Parentheſes, if I may ſo call them, or In- "terludes that happen to come between the more "ſolemn Paſſages, whether Buſineſſes or Recrea- "tions of Life, are wont to be loſt by moſt "Men for want of a Value for them, and even "by good Men for want of Skill to preſerve them: "But as though Grains of Sand and Aſhes be a "Part but of a deſpicable Smallneſs, and very eaſy "and liable to be ſcatter'd and blown away, yet "the skilful Artificer, by a vehement Fire, brings "a Number of theſe to afford him that noble Sub- "ſtance Glaſs; by whoſe Help we may both ſee "ourſelves and our Blemiſhes lively repreſented, "as in Looking-Glaſſes, and diſcern celeſtial Ob- "jects, as with Teleſcopes, and with the Sun "Beams kindle diſpoſed Materials, as with burn- "ing Glaſſes: So when theſe little Fragments or "Parcels of Time, which, if not carefully looked "to, would be diſſipated and loſt, come to be ma- "naged by a skilful Chriſtian, and to be impro- "ved by the Celeſtial Fire of Devotion, they may "be ſo order'd as to afford us both Looking-Glaſ- "ſes to dreſs our Souls by, and Perſpectives to "diſcover heavenly Wonders and Incentives to in-

* Occaſional Reflect. *p.* 9.

"flame

" flame our Hearts with Charity and Zeal: And " ſince Goldſmiths and Refiners are wont all the " Year long carefully to ſave the very Sweepings " of their Shops, becauſe they may contain in them " ſome Filings or Duſt of thoſe richer Metals, " Gold and Silver; I ſee not why a Chriſtian may " not be as careful not to loſe the Fragments, and " leſſer Intervals of a Thing, incomparably more " precious than any Metal, *Time*; eſpecially when " the Improvement of them may not only redeem " ſo many Portions of our Life, but turn them " to pious Uſes, and particularly to the great Ad- " vantage of Devotion." O my Soul! ſtudy this Frugality and good Husbandry; Time is ſhort, do not throw any of it away; *walk circumſpectly, not as Fools, but as wiſe, redeeming the Time*, fix thy Rules; quicken thyſelf to the Obſervation of them by a frequent and near View of Eternity; often call thyſelf to an Account for thy Time; enquire how it paſſes, what Loſs thou ſuſtaineſt therein, and by what Means; and contrive in the beſt Manner thou canſt, how to ſave it and improve it. Lord, be my Guide and Inſtructor herein; make me wiſe, to conſider my latter End, and that *on this Moment of Time my Eternity depends.*

Of the CHRISTIAN's *Ambition.*

Twenty firſt Specimen.

EVery Man has ſomething of Ambition, which is an intenſe Deſire of Good, of farther and greater Good; of riſing and being in ſome Reſpect or other better, more comfortable, more happy. And this is very different in different Sorts of Perſons, according to the different Senſe they have of Things deſirable and excellent, and their different

different Notions of Happineſs. 'Tis ſaid of *Luther*, that *he knew no Ambition but what concerned the Service of God:* Moſt Mens Ambition is directed quite another Way, and has nothing of God for the Object; as how to raiſe or increaſe an Eſtate; to aggrandize themſelves and Families; get Preferments, Titles, Honours, and Reputation amongſt Men; enrich Poſterity, *&c.* for which Purpoſe they form Projects, lay Schemes, and are unwearied in the Purſuit of them. We often ſee them ſell their Children's Souls for a little Grandeur, Money, Settlements, and ſuch like Advantages in the World: Inſtances of this Kind are ſo common, that as moſt Men ſeem to aim at nothing elſe, ſo they are ready to think none do; as if the Luſts of the Fleſh, the Luſt of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life, was really all there was in the World, and all we have to mind in it. Thus blind and beſotted are unthinking Creatures; they are purſuing Shadows and Vanity, and according to their Succeſs applaud themſelves, and are applauded by others: *Men will praiſe thee when thou doſt well to thyſelf*, Pſal. xlix. 18.

But the Chriſtian Ambition is of another Kind, he has more noble divine Views, has choſen another Sort of Happineſs, and is breathing after higher, and more excellent Things; as to *the World*, he is, in ſome Meaſure, *crucified* to it, and it to him, *Gal.* vi. 14. And 'tis not poſſible he ſhould be fond of ſuch a *Caput mortuum*, a blaſted, dead thing, as the World is if it be really *crucified* to him. He is *transformed by the renewing of* his *Mind*, Rom. xii. 2. his *Affections* are *ſet on Things above*, Coloſ. iii. 2. and about theſe his Ambition is employed. In general, 'tis his Ambition to pleaſe God, and be accepted of him: This is the *one Thing* his Soul deſires, and that he's reſolved to ſeek after, all the Days

Days of his Life; in Compariſon of which, all other Things are Cyphers, Vanity, and nothing; Particularly he is ambitious,

That he may obtain a more compleat Conqueſt over ſinful Paſſions, irregular Deſires and Motions: That he may be able to crucify the Fleſh with the Affections and Luſts, cleanſing himſelf from all Filthineſs both of the Fleſh and of the Spirit, perfecting Holineſs in the Fear of God; that all groſs, fleſhly Deſires, all the Deeds of the Body may be mortified; that Pride, Envy, Malice, and ſuch like Filthineſs of the Spirit may be wholly rooted out of his Nature; all lofty Imaginations caſt down, and every Thought brought into Subjection to the Obedience of Chriſt.

That he may have a divine Ability for, and be ready to every good Work; may be ſtrengthened by the Spirit, *with Might in the inward Man*; have a Furniture and Diſpoſition of Mind for all the Duties and Services of Religion; for the Duties of his ſpecial Office, and particular Relations; for Works of Piety and Charity, as Occaſion requires. In a Word, that he may be fitted to do or ſuffer, to converſe with God and Man, according to the Laws and Rules of his ſacred Profeſſion.

That he may always keep Poſſeſſion of himſelf, preſerve a Serenity, Compoſure and Calmneſs within, under any Events; not be elated by Proſperity, or depreſs'd by Adverſity; neither be ruffled by a frowning, or tickled by a ſmiling World; but paſs through every State of Things with Indifferency, bearing either Reproach or Applauſe with an undiſturbed Mind; with a Senſe of the divine Hand in every Thing, and the divine Eye upon him, conſtantly obſerving his Motions and Frame. Chriſt was the ſame when the Multitude hailed him, and when they reviled him, in the midſt

midſt of their *Hoſanna*'s and Detractions! glorious Attainment; could the Chriſtian come up to it, he wou'd triumph therein more than *Alexander* in all his Spoils.

That he may live in a Conſtant Acknowledgment of God and Submiſſion to him in all his Providences; not only bearing, but adoring his Hand in his Diſpenſations, maintaining a holy Complacency or well Pleaſedneſs therein; "he would "conſider, as one * expreſſes it, that God is "the Maſter of the Senſes, that we muſt not "chuſe which Part we ſhall act; it concerns us "only to be careful, that we do it well; always "ſaying, *If* † *this pleaſe God, let it be as it is:* And "we who pray that God's Will may be done on "Earth, as it is in Heaven, muſt remember that "the Angels do whatſoever is commanded them, "and go wherever they are ſent, and refuſe no "Circumſtances: And if their Employment be "croſſed by a higher Decree, they ſit down in "Peace, and rejoice in the Event; as when the "Angel of *Judea* could not prevail in Behalf of "the People committed to his Charge, becauſe "the Angel of *Perſia* oppoſed it; he only told the "Story at the command of God, and was as con-"tent, and worſhipped with as great an Exta-"ſy in his Proportion, as the prevailing Spirit. "Thus ſhould the Chriſtian do, if he keep the "Station wherein God hath placed him; he'll ne-"ver long for Things without, but ſit at home "feaſting upon the divine Providence." This is the Mark the Chriſtian's Ambition levels at, that his Will may in every Thing go along with the divine Will, when clearly manifeſted; not only ſubmitting to it, in this or that Providence, as what *muſt* be, but reſting in it, and approving it, as what *is fit to be, and is beſt:* So that he may almoſt

* *Taylor's* Holy Living, *p.* 105.

† Εἰ τοῦτο τῷ Θεῷ φίλον, τοῦτο γινέσθω. *Dan.* x. 13.

moſt ſay as *Luther*, *fiat Voluntas mea, mea quia tua*; let my Will be done, as being wholly referr'd to, and included in thine.

That he may have his Love enlarged and inflamed, towards God and towards Men; a more extenſive, catholick, divine Charity; a Heart to love Enemies, to overlook and forgive Injuries, and overcome Evil with Good.

That he may preſerve a devout Frame, and keep the Fire of the Altar always in; be glad when he is called to go to the Houſe of God, and find an Heart for Worſhip, publick or ſecret, and that as often as the time of it returns.

That he may taſte the Pleaſures, and partake of the Refreſhments of Worſhip; neither want the ſerious, ſolemn Frame, nor miſs the divine Preſence, but have lively Intercourſe with God therein; ſee his Power and Glory in his Sanctuary, be ſatisfied with the Fatneſs of his Houſe, and drink of the Rivers of his Pleaſure.

That his Children and Houſhold after him (if he be a Parent) may keep the Way of the Lord, be found walking in the Truth, that he may ſee Chriſt formed in them; ſee them partaking of the high Honour and Dignity of being genuine and uſeful Members of the Chriſtian Church. Oh! how doth he travail in Birth for this Purpoſe? beſeeching the Lord Night and Day with Tears: And how would he triumph in it, could he ſee the Travail of his Soul in this Reſpect?

Theſe, and the like, are the Objects of the Chriſtian's Ambition; whilſt the Men of this World are intent upon worldly Good, upon riſing higher, getting more; his Ambition has a nobler Game, and different Reference, *viz.* that he may govern his Spirit, overcome his Corruption, diſcharge his Duties, guard his Frame, and enjoy his God! if he

he can ſucceed in theſe Things, all is well, nothing can then come amiſs to him; let the World revile and reproach, Friends forſake him, and Relations grieve him; if Heaven ſmile, and God lift up the Light of his Countenance upon him, this puts Gladneſs into his Heart, and gives him a Triumph over all Adverſity.

Thus 'tis with Chriſtians of Eminency, of higher Stature and Attainment in Religion. Tho' as long as they are in the World, the Affairs of it will demand ſome of their Attention; they can't wholly overlook the Cravings of the bodily Appetites, nor muſt they neglect the Offices of Life, yet their chief Concern is about the other World, and their Way to it. The Intereſts of that have their moſt ſollicitous, moſt delightful Thoughts; and with ſome it may be the greateſt Number of their Thoughts: Nay even whilſt they ſeem buſy among inferiour Services here below, their Mind is often aſpiring, looking above them, and beyond them. 'Tis a divine Paſſage of the Philoſopher, and yet, no doubt verified in ſome: "As the Rays of the "Sun, ſays he, touch the Earth, and yet are there, "from whence they are darted; ſo a great and de-"vout Mind is familiarly converſant here below, "*ſed hæret inter ſuperos*, 'tis fix'd on God, and the "Inhabitants of another World;" from whence he lets fall a Look upon theſe lower Things, not without Contempt of them, they ſeem ſo little to him.

O my God! regulate my Affections, and direct them to their proper Objects; if my Soul may but proſper and be in Health, and my religious Affairs ſucceed well, as to other Things, more Eſtate, Honour, Reputation, outward Comforts, *&c.* I have nothing to ſay, my Happineſs dependeth not upon them; they may be either good or bad, as they are uſed, as they fit me, or as I need them,

or

or can bear them; and therefore I leave them in a wiſer Hand than my own, either to give or deny, as he ſhall chuſe for me: What thou wilt, and as thou wilt, only forſake me not; grant me thy Preſence and Favour, and 'tis enough. *Deus meus & omnia: Whom have I in Heaven but thee, and there is none on Earth I deſire beſides thee?*

Of the Religious Education of CHILDREN.

Twenty Second Specimen.

FAtal are the Miſtakes Men run into in this great and momentous Affair, the Education of their Children. The common Methods of Education don't ſeem to have any thing of God and Religion in them. O my Soul! be upon thy Guard here. *I know Abraham,* ſays God, *that he will command his Children and Houſhold after him, and they ſhall keep the Way of the Lord,* Gen. xviii. 19. Let this be thy ſollicitous Care, and conſtant, faithful Endeavour. 'Tis true, I cannot give them Grace, and ſecure their Religion; but as God has appointed me my Duty, and laid his Commands upon me, he has encouraged my Expectation of Succeſs. A Religious Education, if it be truly and *throughout* ſuch, and don't fail in any neceſſary Branches of it, is often, and it may be ordinarily followed with a Bleſſing, and made effectual: *Train up a Child in the Way he ſhould go, and when he is old he will not depart from it,* Prov. xxii. 5. Lord, help me to attend my Duty and thy Preſcriptions, and leave the Event in thy Hand. In order to it I would propoſe to myſelf the following Rules.

1ſt, I purpoſe and reſolve to be ſerious and ſolemn in devoting my Children to God in Baptiſm.

A great

A great many ſeem to make Baptiſm only a proper Time of giving Names to their Children, or a Seaſon of Feaſting and Merriment, or at leaſt matter of Form and Compliance with an eſtabliſh'd Cuſtom, leaving out what is moſt eſſential to the Ordinance, the Concern they have with God therein. When Parents offer their Children to Baptiſm, they are ſolemnizing a Family Covenant as it were; that is, the common Chriſtian Covenant, as made with them and their Family, owning their Relation to God the Father, Son, and holy Spirit; endeavouring to inſert, as I may ſay, the Name of this or that Child into God's Covenant, and to continue the high Privilege and Honour of ſuch a Relation in their Family. And how important a Thing is this? and with how much Seriouſneſs ſhould we go about it? O my Soul! remember thy Faults this Day; be humbled for paſt Remiſsneſs and Neglects, and be more ſerious and devout in thy future Tranſactions of this Kind. I knew a Family, all the Branches of which ſeem'd to have an early, and more than common Senſe of Religion, for which a judicious and grave Man gave this Reaſon, that next to the ſpecial Favour and Grace of God, he thought it owing to the religious Solemnity and Seriouſneſs, with which the Head of the Family devoted his Children to God in Baptiſm.

2dly, I purpoſe and reſolve to be early and conſtant in the proper Methods of Inſtruction; particularly to inculcate and labour to poſſeſs them with a Conviction and Senſe of the Worth and Dignity of the Soul, of the Certainty of a future State of Immortality, of the Importance of eternal Things, and ſet myſelf all I can to bring this World into a juſt Neglect and Contempt with them; to inſtil a high Veneration for the holy Scriptures, recom-

mending and making the Bible their chief Study and Delight, if it may be. This has been the Way of good People in all Ages. *Timothy from a Child knew the holy Scriptures*, 2 Tim. iii. 15. The *Jews* were commanded *diligently to teach* the Words of the Law to their Children, *Deut.* vi. 6. and how defective ſoever they were in other Things, their Zeal in this particular was very commendable. *Joſephus* tells us, their Children were train'd up in the Knowledge of the Law from their very Infancy, and were ſo expert therein, that *they knew every Thing as perfectly as their own Names.* Nor were the Primitive Chriſtians leſs careful in this reſpect: The Bible, eſpecially the New Teſtament, was their Inſtitutes, the Grammar of their Religion, in which their Catechumens and Children were grounded. St. *Jerome*, in one of his Epiſtles, giving Directions for the Education of a young Lady of a noble Chriſtian Family, adviſes, "That as ſoon as "ſhe was capable ſhe ſhould learn the *Pſalms*, *Pro*-"*verbs*, *Eccleſiaſtes*; next be taught the four Goſ-"pels, and have them always in her Hand; then "get the *Acts* and *Epiſtles* by Heart, and then paſs "to the reading of the Prophets." How little of this is there in the preſent Diſcipline of moſt Families? Muſick, Dancing, Play-Books, with a Collection of Novels, light Poetry, *&c.* Theſe are looked upon as the great Accompliſhments of young Perſons, and mainly attended to in their Education; which, no doubt, is one great Cauſe of that Degeneracy we ſo much complain of in the Profeſſion of the Chriſtian Religion. Conſider, O my Soul! that in Baptiſm thou entereſt thy Children into the School of Chriſt, and layeſt thyſelf under Obligations to teach them his Doctrine; endeavour to do this with Conſtancy and Care; put *his* Book into their Hands, and help them to take out

out of it the great and important Leſſons it contains.

3dly, I purpoſe and reſolve to watch and guard their Manners, and apply myſelf in all the Methods I can, to cure the Maladies and Diſtempers of their Minds. I would conſtantly recommend to them all ſocial and divine Virtues, Love to God and Man, in all the Branches of it, Sobriety, Modeſty, Humility, the Government of their Paſſions and Appetites; Diffidence of themſelves, Eſteem and Reverence of Superiors, eſpecially their Parents, Miniſters and Inſtructors; Juſtice, Truth, and Charity in their Words; and when any Symptoms of evil, any immoral, vicious Inclinations begin to appear, I would ſet myſelf, with great Sollicitude, to ſuppreſs them and root them out; to which Purpoſe I would carefully watch over them, and obſerve every thing of this Kind; I would note down their more remarkable Miſcarriages from time to time, put *them* upon doing the like, and not only give ſuitable Admonitions and Cautions, but direct to ſuch Texts of Scripture where they may ſee themſelves corrected and cenſured: And to enforce all, would add the Sanction of mine Authority, *commanding* my Children and Houſhold after me to keep the Way of the Lord; encouraging them by proper Rewards in well-doing, and reſtraining by Threats and Puniſhments from the contrary, *Prov.* xix. 18. *Prov.* xiii. 24.

4thly, I purpoſe and reſolve at fit Times to addreſs myſelf to them in a more ſolemn Manner, treating with them about the Affairs of their Souls; warning them of the Danger of ſuch and ſuch Neglects, ſuch and ſuch Practices and Purſuits; recommending to them Religion from all ſuitable Topicks; and particularly preſſing them to a perſonal

covenanting with God, especially at the Lord's Table; for which Purpose I would endeavour to afford them all proper Helps.

5thly, I purpose and resolve to dispose of them in the World, to chuse their Callings, Employments and Masters; their Relations, Husbands, and Wives, so far as I can, and the whole State of their Affairs, *with an intire Reference and Subserviency to the great Ends of Religion.* Oh! that I may not, as is too commonly the Case, by Carelessness and Treachery in these Instances, destroy what I have been building; and after I have devoted my Children to God, and engaged to bring them up according to the Rules and Laws of the Christian Discipline, sacrifice them to *Mammon*, and barter away their Souls for a little present Advantage: What is this but to imitate those wretched Idolaters the *Prophet* speaks of, *Jer.* xxxii. 35. Who *built high Places to* Baal, *to cause their Sons and their Daughters to pass through the Fire unto* Molech. Their Souls, if not their Bodies, hereby become a Victim. Oh! may I never be guilty of this Perfidiousness. I profess to take God as my Covenant God; I have given up my Children to him in Covenant; I lie to him, and am an Hypocrite, unless I chuse him as my Portion and theirs, esteeming his Loving-Kindness better than Life.

6thly, I purpose, and shall endeavour to enforce all my Instructions by my Example, and not to run down in Practice what I recommend by Precept; would take Care whilst I inculcate to them the Necessity of Religion, and of minding another World, preferring the Interests of it to this World, not to neglect it myself, and thereby destroy the Efficacy of my own Doctrine; would take Care, while I talk to them of Moderation, Humility, Self-denial, *&c.* not to live in the contrary Vices myself,

ſelf, and indulge myſelf in Practices I am conſtantly repreſenting to them the Danger of; ſo, while I talk to them of governing their Paſſions, I give a looſe to my own; and againſt reviling and backbiting others, I daily take a Liberty of doing ſo before them; if while I talk to them of the Duties of Retirement, of Diligence and Conſtancy therein, I manifeſt I have no Regard to theſe Things myſelf; often read grave Lectures of Mortification and Contempt of the World, and yet diſcover by my Conduct, both of myſelf and them, that I have nothing ſo much at Heart; this can have no other Tendency but to undermine all my Inſtructions, and make the young Pupil deſpiſe them as Words in Courſe, and a ſort of Cant; or at leaſt make him like myſelf, *an Hypocrite, and vain Pretender to Religion.* Dread, O my Soul! this trifling; if Religion be neceſſary and good for others, 'tis good for thee; nor wilt thou ever teach to Purpoſe, whilſt an ill Conſcience and an ill Example ſtare thee in the Face. Parents ſhould be able to ſay to their Children, as the *Apoſtle* doth to the *Theſſalonians, Ye are Witneſſes, and God alſo, how holily and juſtly, and unblameably we behaved ourſelves among you,* 1 Theſſ. ii. 10. *Thoſe Things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard and ſeen in me do, and the God of Peace ſhall be with you,* Phil. iv. 9.

7thly, I purpoſe and reſolve to look up to God, in frequent, fervent Prayer, for his Inſtruction, to accompany and crown mine. This muſt be my daily Work; and I would often ſet ſome Time apart for more ſolemn Interceſſion and Supplication in behalf of my Children; laying before him, and enlarging upon their ſeveral Caſes, Neceſſities and Wants, and recommending them particularly to God; begging he would direct me in my Methods of Conduct towards them, and eſpecially

when I have any close Reproof, or Admonition to give them; that he would assist me in that Application, and bless it, prepare their Hearts to receive it, make it suitable and effectual. The more we depend on God in this, and all the great Affairs of Religion, the more Success we are like to have; he has often prosper'd, and own'd such a Dependence. *Ambrose* told *Monica*, the Mother of *Austin*, who had been so importunate for his Conversion, that *a Son of so many Prayers could not miscarry:* Not that Prayer, though as fervent as *Monica's*, is always successful; but 'tis often so; often a Means of enriching and blessing a Family, and sometimes has been answer'd in very glorious Fruits, and prov'd the best Inheritance to their Children, after the pious Supplicants have been laid in the Dust.

Help me, O my God! with all suitable Zeal and Patience, to attend my Duty in this Particular of it; may I walk within my House with a perfect Heart; not only instructing, but exhorting and charging *as a Father his Children, that they walk worthy of God*, 1 Thess. ii. 11, 12. Whilst so many are seeking great Things for themselves, and theirs in this World, I would seek great Things of a more excellent and durable Nature; whilst they project how to make a *Man* of this or that Child, as they express it, I would be sollicitous to make every one of mine a Christian, and constantly pursue such Measures as have the most direct Tendency to that Purpose. Lord, grant me the Desire and Travail of my Soul herein, and I have nothing greater, nothing farther to ask!

Of

Of glorifying God.

'TIS agreed, I think, among Chriſtians, whatever End God may be ſaid to have in making the World, and in all his Works, that the great and ultimate End of Man, and which he is to propoſe to himſelf as his End, is God himſelf, his Honour and Glory. This Religion teacheth us; *whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we are to do all to the Glory of God*, 1 Cor. x. 31. But though this be allowed to be our End, and what we often talk of as ſuch, it may be few, comparatively, have any diſtinct and juſt Notion of the Thing, *what it is to glorify God.* 'Tis not certainly to add to his Glory, to make him glorious, or more glorious than he is; this no Creatures, neither Men nor Angels can do: But 'tis, in ſhort, *to preſerve and expreſs a Senſe of his Excellency.* We glorify God, when in our whole Conduct and Behaviour we ſhew an Eſteem of him, and Regard to him, ſuitable to the Dignity of his Nature; as when we have thoſe inward Affections, and diſcover them upon all Occaſions, that are due to a Being of ſuch Excellencies, and anſwer the ſeveral Perfections we acknowledge in him: For Inſtance, *Twenty Third Specimen,*

We glorify his Power when we own and celebrate it in all the Diſplays thereof, in his Works, both of Creation and Providence; when we rely on him for the Performance of all he has promiſed, being perſuaded he *can do every Thing, and that no Thought can be witholden from him*, Job xliii. 2. Thus *Abraham* glorified the divine Power, truſting it through ſuch Difficulties as a weak Faith could not have ſurmounted; he *believed in Hope againſt Hope; conſider'd not his own Body, now dead,*

when he was about 100 *Years old, nor yet the Deadneſs of* Sarah's *Womb. He ſtagger'd not at the Promiſe through Unbelief, but was ſtrong in Faith, giving Glory to God,* Rom. iv. 18, 19, 20. The three *Jewiſh* Worthies glorified the divine Power, when they ſet it againſt the Threats of the haughty Monarch, and in Conſideration of it deſpiſed all his Terrors. *The God whom we ſerve,* ſay they, *is able to deliver us out of thy Hand,* Dan. viii. 17. The Chriſtian glorifieth it by the like Truſt, in all Dangers and Difficulties, particularly in his confident Hope of a Reſurrection by the Power of God, *Matt.* xxii. 29. Farther, we glorify his Power, when we fear him more than all other Beings, *Matt.* x. 28. When we reverence him as the great Sovereign and ſupream Lord of all, *Matt.* vi. 13. and in a Word, when we expect all Performances of Power from him, and ſlight ſuch Objections as would diſcourage our Faith and Truſt.

We glorify his Wiſdom, when we take Notice of the Manifeſtations of it in all his Ways; when we maintain a Veneration ſuitable to ſo great an Excellency; when we implicitly acquieſce in his Providences, even though we underſtand not the Meaning and Deſign of them; believing that all God doth is well done; that there can be no Error in his Adminiſtration; when accordingly we wait for, and reſign to his Conduct in all Things.

We glorify his Mercy when we make that our Refuge under a Senſe of Guilt, and believe it ſufficient to pardon the greateſt Tranſgreſſions; and will do it, in the Way, and according to the Plan and Scheme of the Goſpel Covenant, *Pſal.* li. 1.

We glorify his Omniſcience and Immenſity, when we ſet him always before us, and at our right Hand; believe he ſeeth in ſecret; and accordingly are as buſy in that part of Religion, which

is

is withdrawn from the View of Men, and as devout in it, as if all was tranſacted upon the open Theatre of the World, *Matt.* vi. 6. When a Senſe of his Eye upon us, and his certain Knowledge of the inward Motions, Thoughts and Intentions of the Heart, reſtrain from thoſe Sins that have the Temptation of Privacy; when we dare not diſſemble and act with Diſguiſe, becauſe God knows it; dare not lie or conceal the Truth when called to utter it, becauſe, tho' we may paſs undiſcover'd amongſt Men, yet we conſider that all Things are naked and open to his Eyes. *My Son*, ſays *Joſhua* to *Achan*, *confeſs and give Glory to the God of Iſrael, and tell me what thou haſt done*, Joſh. vii. 19. When we reverence his Preſence, at all Times ſpeaking, thinking and acting in his Fear.

We glorify his Holineſs and Majeſty, when we behave ourſelves with ſuitable Lowlineſs and Self-Abaſement before him, *Gen.* xviii. 27. And like the Seraphim cover our Faces when we behold his, *Iſai.* vi. 2. When a Senſe of his infinite Purity and Greatneſs deeply humbles us, lays us in the Duſt as vile and nothing.

We glorify him in his Providences, when we reverence every Diſpenſation; eye his Hand, own his Sovereignty, Juſtice, Wiſdom, Holineſs, *&c.* therein; dutifully ſubmit to his Will, and whatever he appointed and doth, we fall at his Foot and do Obeiſance.

We glorify him in his Word and Laws, when we eſteem them according to their Excellency, as holy, wiſe, juſt and good; make them our Study, Meditation, and Delight, our Monitors and Rule; ſubjecting ourſelves to the Authority of God therein, and that at all Times, and in all Things.

In ſhort, we glorify him *as God*, as the moſt excellent Being, when our greateſt Ambition, and conſtant

conſtant Endeavour is to love him, ſerve him, obey him, and, in our Meaſure, to be like him; when we are ſollicitous to obtain his Favour, eſteeming his *loving Kindneſs better than Life*; are more concerned to pleaſe him, and recommend ourſelves to him, than about any other Intereſt in the World; when we covet his Preſence, and triumph in it, and are willing not only to leave this World, but to go through Death, any Sort of Death, for the Joys of his Preſence.'

This is to glorify God; we glorify him *inwardly*, when we have that Eſteem and Reverence of God, Fear, Truſt, Love, *&c.* that the Perfections and Excellencies of his Nature require: And we glorify him *outwardly*, and give others Occaſion to glorify him, when we ſhew our inward Eſteem, Reverence, Devotion, *&c.* in a Courſe of Action; ſpeaking honourably of God upon all Occaſions; publickly worſhipping him, and with all becoming Devotion; expreſſing a Zeal for his Name and Honour; being ready to vindicate it at all times, as we are able; and in a Word, acting in every Inſtance as thoſe who underſtand the Perfection of their Rule, the Greatneſs and Excellency of their Maſter, and *as ſeeing him that is inviſible:* Hereby our *Light ſhines before Men*, and we give them Occaſion (ſeeing our good Works, with what *Decorum* and Decency, with what Reverence of God, *&c.* we act) to *glorify our Father that is in Heaven.*

O my Soul! let this be thy Care, thy Study and thy Ambition: To honour God in thy Thoughts, Words and Actions; to diſcover a due Senſe of his infinite Excellencies, and to make a juſt Repreſentation of him to the World; give him the Glory of every Attribute, and conſtantly act under the Influence of it; let his Power deter thee from Sin, encourage

encourage thee to thy Duty in the midſt of all Difficulties and Dangers: *Fear not him that can kill the Body* only; let a Senſe of his Perfections draw out all ſuitable Graces; a Senſe of his conſtant Preſence compoſe thee to Gravity and Decency of Behaviour: Endeavour thus to glorify God, make it the general End of thy Life, and the End of thy particular Actions: *Whether thou eateſt or drinkeſt, or whatever thou doſt, do all to the Glory of God:* Give him the Glory of all he has done for the World, for the Church, for thyſelf: Acknowledge him in every Thing, in thy Enjoyments, Comforts, Attainments, and Works; let it be engraven on thy Heart, *By the Grace of God I am what I am.* This I have done by the good Hand of my God upon me; it was his Wiſdom that directed me, his Grace that ſupplied me, his Strength that carried me thro' the Service. When I can ſay this with a full Conviction of my Dependence on God's Help, and with a due Senſe of his Goodneſs therein, I underſtand the *Gloria Deo* (Glory to God) which is too often paid him in a Compliment, and there is ſomething more than Form in my Aſcription. O my Soul! endeavour to fix thy Attention right; make God thy all; his Glory thy conſtant Aim: Thou needeſt not exclude thy own Intereſt, nor art thou required to do ſo; that's always in Connexion with God's Glory: He that truly honours God, will effectually ſerve his own Intereſt and Comfort, and ſecure his Salvation. Lord, aſſiſt me in the Choice of my End, and in the Purſuit thereof; fill my Mind with a Senſe of thy Excellencies; and may I, in all my Converſe with thyſelf and with thy Fellow-Creatures, act as under thy Eye and Influence, walking worthy, and ſhewing forth the Virtues of him that has called me; of whom, thro' whom, to whom are all Things, *to whom be Glory for ever andever.* And

And thus I have given ſome more Examples for the Aſſiſtance of intelligent and devout Chriſtians. I have drawn them out to a greater Length than I deſigned. It may be the Subjects I have choſen will be leſs acceptable to ſome, and may be thought not ſo proper for Meditation; but my Intention is to lay down the Method and Manner of Meditation; to which Purpoſe any Subjects may be ſuitable: And indeed I have made Choice of theſe, not only becauſe I look upon them of Importance in the Chriſtian Life; but becauſe I apprehend them growing out of Faſhion, and almoſt obſolete among us. The Strain of modern Writings in Divinity, and modern Sermons, ſeems to run another Way; and being myſelf convinc'd that there is a Reality in theſe Things, and that many of them are the Truths *by which Souls chiefly live* and proſper, and in which, particularly, Devotion is eminently concern'd, I found it no Difficulty to riſque my Reputation, and expoſe myſelf to the Cenſure of ſome Criticks, rather than neglect any Part of the Service, to ſerious Perſons, I propos'd in this Eſſay. I ſhall haſten through what remains on the Head of Meditation, and only touch upon a few Subjects *for occaſional Meditation*, in a very tranſient Way, with greater Negligence of Stile and Method, and thereby make the Specimen fitter for Imitation.

SECT.

Sect. X.

Some Specimens of Occaſional Meditation.

On the Reverence due in God's Worſhip.

Saturday Night, 7 a-Clock.

I Am by the good Hand of my God upon me brought near the Cloſe of another Week, and have a near Proſpect of another Sabbath. Among the Duties that lie before me the enſuing Day, thoſe that concern publick Worſhip, are not the leaſt conſiderable. It was, I preſume, one great end, if not the chief end of God, in the Inſtitution of a Sabbath, or Day of ſacred Reſt, and for which it is continued in the Church, that Men might meet together, openly acknowledge God, pay homage to him, and converſe with him in the Solemnities of Worſhip; and upon the Diſcharge of this Duty in a right manner, I reckon the Sanctification of the Sabbath, and the Comfort of it very much dependeth.

Among other Defects with reference hereto, which I have to accuſe my ſelf of, one is Want of due Reverence in the Houſe and Worſhip of God. I have not enough conſider'd, that when I come into the Houſe of God, the Place of publick Worſhip, I am in his more ſpecial, immediate, ſolemn Preſence; and conſequently that a more than common Reverence is due from me. Oh my God! forgive paſt Forgetfulneſs and Neglects, and

and help me in my future Conduct. Thou art every where preſent, filling Heaven and Earth; but here I may expect a more ſpecial Preſence. Oh! that I had a greater Senſe of it: Help me here to ſet thee always before me; and when I enter into thy Courts, to behave my ſelf as one under deep Impreſſions of thy Eye and Preſence, ſaying as the devout Patriarch, *How dreadful* (or venerable) *is this Place! this is none other but the Houſe of God, and this is the Gate of Heaven*, Gen. xxviii. 17.

It was one of the Precepts and Rules God gave his ancient People, the Jews, that they ſhould *reverence his Sanctuary*, Lev. xix. 30. There was, no doubt, a peculiar Holineſs in that Place, and a peculiar Reverence due to it, founded on Reaſons peculiar to that Diſpenſation: Its very Name imports Holineſs and Sanctity. It was a divine Structure, a Building of God. He drew the Model of it, *Exod.* xxvi. 30. It had a ſolemn Conſecration, by divine Appointment, *Exod.* xlix. 10. It was diſtinguiſh'd and honour'd by the *Schechinah*, the ſenſible glorious Preſence of God, *Exod.* xxv. 8. And as God took Poſſeſſion of it, and ſanctified it by his extraordinary Preſence, ſo from thence he manifeſted himſelf to his People, and often in a peculiar ſenſible Manner, *Exod.* xxv. 22. xxxiv. 35. *Levit.* i. 1. Theſe Things gave a Glory to that Place of Worſhip, made it a *Sanctuary*, and call'd for ſpecial Reverence: Accordingly ſundry Laws and Rules were preſcrib'd them, relating to that Reverence, which I ſhall not at preſent meddle with.

'Tis certain there is now under the Goſpel *no ſuch Sanctuary*, or holy Place. It was the *Shechinah* eminently that diſtinguiſh'd that Place heretofore, and render'd it holy. Thus *Sinai* and *Sion* were call'd holy, becauſe the *Shechinah* or Glory of the

the Lord appear'd in them in ſo illuſtrious a manner; and hence the Mount of Transfiguration is call'd the *holy Mount*, 2 *Pet.* i. 18. becauſe of the excellent Glory there manifeſted, v. 17. But this Holineſs was purely *relative*, owing to the hallowing, ſanctifying, extraordinary Preſence of God, and ceas'd whenever that was withdrawn. *Shiloh* was no longer holy, when the Ark and Tabernacle and *Shechinah* were remov'd from it. *Jeruſalem* was once the holy City, but now is not ſo, becauſe God has forſaken it. 'Tis obſervable that when the *Shechinah* had at any time remov'd from the *Sanctuary*, and left the moſt holy Place, as it often did, particularly to direct the Children of *Iſrael* in their Marches, it was no longer eſteem'd *moſt holy*; and therefore not only *Aaron*, but his Sons, the common Prieſts, might come into it, *Numb.* iv. 5. So that I think it certain there can remain with us no ſuch Thing, properly ſpeaking, as *a Sanctuary* or holy Place, unleſs we can prove a *Shechinah* in them. We may conſecrate them by Forms and Rites of Religion, and invocate the divine Preſence; may call them holy, but can never make them holy in the ſame Senſe as the Jewiſh Tabernacle and Temple were holy: Unleſs by ſome Means or other, we can introduce a ſenſible Diſplay of the Divinity into them; and therefore we find Places of Worſhip under the Goſpel were choſen without Diſtinction, and without any Pretence of Holineſs. So our *Saviour* told us it ſhould be, *John* iv. 20, 21, 23. And ſo we find it was: *Chriſt* preach'd in Synagogues, *Mat.* xiii. 54. *Mark* vi. 2. On a Mountain, *Mat.* v. 1. By the Sea-ſide, *Mark* iv. 1. In a Ship, *Mat.* xiii. 2. In an Houſe, *Mark* ii. 1, 2. And thus did the Apoſtles, *Acts* i. 13. ii. 46. v. 42. xviii. 7. 11. xviii. 30, 31. There was *but one* particular Place which heretofore

God choſe to put his Name in, and to which their Sacrifices and Offerings were to be brought; but under the Goſpel Incenſe is to be offer'd *in every Place*, Mal. i. 11.

But though Places of Worſhip are not now holy, as under the Jewiſh Diſpenſation the Tabernacle and Temple were, yet undoubtedly there is a Reverence due to him, or at leaſt *in them*. They may ſtill be call'd *the Houſe of God*, and ought to be eſteem'd the Places of his ſpecial Preſence. The Jewiſh Sanctuary was frequently termed the *Tabernacle of the Congregation*, or Meeting, not from the People's meeting together in it, but rather becauſe there GOD met with them. Our Places of Worſhip are ſtill Tabernacles of *Meeting*; Places in which we profeſſedly go to meet with God, and more ſolemnly approach him. Where God is worſhipp'd according to his own Inſtitution and Appointment, he ſtill records his Name, and we may expect the Accompliſhment of what he has promis'd, that *he will come* to his Worſhippers *and bleſs them*, Exod. xx. 24. *Wherever two or three are gathered together in his Name, he will be in the midſt of them*, Mat. xviii. 20. Whether that Text refer *directly* to Aſſemblies for Worſhip or not, we need not, I think, exclude this Senſe in the Interpretation. God is *now* preſent with his worſhipping Servants, as well as formerly, tho' there was ſomething peculiar with reſpect to outward Glory, and the like, in the Manifeſtation of his Preſence then; and it may be that viſible *Shechinah*, or Glory, which fill'd the Places of Worſhip heretofore, may be conſider'd as typical of a moral ſpiritual *Shechinah* and Glory under the Goſpel; of that greater Meaſure of Light, Life and Comfort, that devout Men are favour'd with in Goſpel-worſhip.

'Tis

'Tis of some Weight in this Matter, and a good Argument of a special, eminent Presence of God in Places of publick Worship under the Gospel, that the *Angels* are represented as waiting, and giving their Attendance therein. That celebrated Critick, Mr. *Joseph Mede*, thinks that when God is said to be in one Place more than another, 'tis to be understood of his Retinue or Train. "The "King, saith he, is there where his Court and "Retinue is; so the Lord of Host is there spe-"cially present, where the heavenly Guards, the "blessed Angels, keep their Station and Rendez-"vous." And he endeavours to prove that all the Appearances of the divine Majesty in Scripture are describ'd by that Retinue: And indeed the *Shechinah* or Glory of God consisted, as many think, of the divine Majesty with Angels ministring to him, making up his Retinue, and executing his Commands. There were Ministers and Tokens of his Presence, and hence we find by God's Appointment *Cherubims* set up in the holy Place, overspreading and covering the Ark, call'd by the Apostle *Cherubim of Glory*, Heb. ix. 5. (*i. e.*) Symbols of the divine glorious Presence. The Angels were eminently present in God's Temple and Sanctuary of old, as a Signification of the divine Presence there; and the Apostle intimates that they are still present in Christian Assemblies and Places of publick Worship under the Gospel, 1 *Cor.* xi. 10. where he is admonishing to behave with Decency and Reverence in such Places, *because of the Angels*. Angels are present, as Spectators, and it may be for other Purposes, with Christians in their Worship: Hence *Chrysostome* calls the Church or Place of publick Worship, *the Place of Angels, of Arch-angels, and Palace of God.*

Oh! my Soul, reflect on this Matter, and learn to reverence God's Sanctuary. Look upon the Place of Worſhip as the Place of God's ſpecial, ſolemn Preſence, and let the Conſideration of that compoſe thee into a grave, decent, reverend Behaviour: Endeavour for a Heart, Temper and Frame that becomes one, who is ſo often converſant with God, a Being of ſovereign Majeſty and Greatneſs, infinite Purity and Holineſs. Particularly,

I would reſolve and endeavour to maintain Holineſs of Manners, and Purity of Heart. Under the Law ſtrict Orders were given, not to approach God whilſt under any Defilement, and ſuch as preſum'd to do ſo, were to be cut off, *Lev.* vii. 20. God dwelt among that People, and out of Reverence to his Preſence they were oblig'd to the utmoſt Caution and Circumſpection in their whole Conduct. Their Eating, Drinking, all their Converſe was under the Regulation of the Divine Law. Oh! my Soul, attend to this: Thou worſhippeſt an holy God, therefore ſtudy to be holy. If thou regardeſt Iniquity in thy Heart, and alloweſt thy ſelf in any Way of Wickedneſs and Defilement, God will not hear thy Prayer, *Pſal.* lxvi. 18. Thy *Sacrifices are an Abomination to him*, Prov. xv. 8. Thou doſt but affront him when thou appeareſt in his Preſence. Take care therefore to *waſh thy Hands in Innocency, and ſo compaſs his Altar about*, Pſal. xxvi. 6.

I would reſolve and endeavour to get my Mind fill'd with a Senſe of God, and of his ſpecial Preſence, *when I am going to his Houſe and Worſhip*; and when I enter his Houſe, would endeavour to meet him there, directing my Mind and Thoughts to him, looking up for his Preſence, and begging his Help.

I would endeavour to behave myſelf with a becoming Awe and Reverence whilſt in Worſhip, attending diligently and devoutly to the Work I am about, and at the ſame time keep my Eyes fix'd on God; watching againſt all Indecency and Rudeneſs in the Preſence of the divine Majeſty and his holy Angels, governing my outward Deportment ſuitable to ſuch a Preſence; guarding againſt whatever might be offenſive and inconſiſtent with the Reverence requir'd, as laughing, gazing about, lolling, ſleeping, *&c.* And eſpecially I would guard my Thoughts and Affections, as knowing that the God I am worſhipping, *ſearches the Heart, and trieth the Reins.* Lord, aſſiſt me by thy Grace, teach me the true Rule of thy Worſhip: May I look well to my Feet (my Affections) when I go to the Houſe of God, and may I look well to them while there: Fill me with the *Shechinah* of thy Spirit, and conſtantly favour me with thy Preſence: May I *ſee thy Power and thy Glory in thy Sanctuary*; then ſhall my Soul be ſatisfy'd as with Marrow and Fatneſs, and my Mouth ſhall praiſe thee with joyful Lips.

Preparation for the Lord's Day.

SATURDAY Night, 7 a-Clock.

I Have been brought thus far through another Week: I find much Occaſion for Thankfulneſs, not only that God has continued the uſual Courſe of his kind Providence, but for ſome ſpecial Favours and Mercies, which as I deſire to bleſs God for, ſo I would take ſome notice of them in my Diary. Oh! may I not be formal in ſuch Things, but record the loving Kindneſſes of God Specimen II.

with all ſuitable Gratitude and Devotion! As I have matter of Praiſe before me, ſo matter of Complaint againſt myſelf; much reaſon to be humbled for ſuch Infirmities, as I ſee ſtill accompany me, and compaſs me about. Oh! when ſhall I be above and beyond theſe Complaints? However I have Reaſon to bleſs God that Things are no worſe with me. In the main, this has been a comfortable Week: I have not been wholly left to myſelf; left to fall either into great Sins, or great Sufferings. I have not loſt all my Time, nor quite neglected my Duty, either to God or Man; and I hope I may ſay I have had ſome Hours of comfortable Converſe with God, particularly upon Thurſday Night, when——Lord, accept my Acknowledgments of thy Grace and Goodneſs towards me, and of my Miſcarriages.

To-morrow is a Day ſet apart by the Appointment of God, for the ſpecial ſolemn Work of Religion, which I would now endeavour, in the beſt manner I can, to prepare my ſelf for. Lord aſſiſt me therein! *Awake, oh North-wind, and come thou South, blow upon my Garden, that the Spices thereof may flow out.* I can't underſtand what they mean that object againſt the Morality of the Sabbath, and are for laying it common; certainly they are not friends to themſelves. I can't but look upon it as a wiſe and merciful Inſtitution; not only a Mark of God's ſovereignty, but an Inſtance of his Kindneſs: Herein he hath join'd our Duty and Happineſs. Whatever others do, I am ſure I need no ſuch Pauſes as theſe, in the Purſuits of the World, and deſire to be thankful that I am ſo frequently call'd off from the defiling diſtracting Buſineſs of this Earth, and to turn my Face more directly towards Heaven. O! for Wiſdom and Grace, to improve my Sabbaths aright, that every Sabbath might be

a Foretaſte of my everlaſting Sabbath, and as one of the Days of Heaven to me.

I purpoſe to morrow to purſue the Rules I have often heard recommended, and which I am convinc'd are juſt and reaſonable (and accordingly have preſcrib'd them to my ſelf) concerning my Behaviour in the ſeveral Duties of the Lord's Day, ſecret, private and publick. I would often reviſe them, and always attend to them: And as I have abundant Reaſon to be ſenſible of my Omiſſions, Neglect of Rules, Miſmanagement of ſacred Work, it becomes me to remember my Faults this Day; and as I would cenſure my ſelf, ſo I would take the preſent Occaſion to renew my Reſolutions, particularly in the following Inſtances:

I would take Care to loſe none of the ſacred Time of the Lord's Day, but diligently employ the whole of it in publick or ſecret Duties; in Works of Piety or Mercy, ſo far as the State and Strength of the Body will admit, and leave no Intervals and Parentheſes of religious Exerciſes and Services, but ſuch as may fit me to return to them with more Advantage.

I would make a great account of ſolemn Worſhip; and tho' I would be cautious, I don't aim too high, leſt Diſappointments turn to my Diſcouragement; yet I would always have Deſigns and Views ſuitable to ſuch weighty Employment, as I am to be in through the Day, eſpecially when engag'd in Worſhip. 'Tis ſomething great and important I am about, when in the ſpecial and immediate Preſence of God, converſing and tranſacting with him concerning the Affairs of my Soul and Eternity: Accordingly it becomes me to be ſolicitous about Succeſs herein, and be in good earneſt in all my Work.

I would reſolve and endeavour to prepare myſelf duly for the Work of every Sabbath, and particularly of the next; would be early upon my Knees, endeavouring to get my Heart warm'd in ſecret Devotion; to awaken my Faculties, fix my Attention, beſpeak the Preſence of God with me, beg a Bleſſing upon the ſeveral Ordinances of the Day; upon the Miniſter or Miniſters I may hear, whom I would never fail affectionately to recommend to God, deſiring they may be help'd in delivering their Meſſage, and that a ſuitable Word may be directed to my Heart.

I would be eſpecially careful to join in the Devotion of the Congregation in the Prayers and Praiſes that are offer'd up. Alas! how much have I fail'd in this reſpect? How often do I withdraw my Attention (my Eyes and Thoughts rambling about) bearing no Part in the Worſhip? I purpoſe henceforth, to morrow particularly, to watch againſt this Trifling, and to keep cloſe to the Work in hand, going along with the Miniſter in all his Petitions, not only hearing them, but ſetting my hearty *Amen* to them; making them my own, and unite in ſending them up to Heaven. Lord, aſſiſt me by thy Grace!

I purpoſe, and ſhall endeavour to make ſome Advantage by every Sermon I hear. This may be done, even tho' it be none of the beſt, if it be not altogether Ramble and Impertinence; in which caſe, I confeſs, 'tis not eaſy to keep up Attention, much leſs employ Devotion; but if it be grave, ſolid and judicious, notwithſtanding it have nothing extraordinary and new, I may improve by it; as in the Exerciſe of Grace, reliſhing known Truths, feeding upon them, delighting in them, *&c.* When I go to hear the Word of God, I do not always propoſe new Light, and further Inſtruction; much

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leſs ſhould I propoſe the Entertainment of my Curioſity, but rather the warming my Heart, and having my Mind ſtirr'd up by way of Remembrance: Acordingly I would chiefly value ſuch Preaching that has moſt of this Tendency; that is fitted to rouſe the Conſcience, and better the Heart, rather than tickle the Ear. I have been pleas'd with ſome Thoughts of the *truly honourable Mr. Boyle*, in one of his occaſional Reflections; that upon the ſight of a Looking-glaſs, with a rich Frame, he obſerves, " That tho' the curious Frame does P. 172.
" as well pleaſe as attract the Eye, yet it does not
" repreſent the Image of the Beholder's Face; ſo
" the fine Expreſſions many applaud in Sermons,
" have no peculiar Virtue in them, have no Power
" like a good Looking-glaſs, to acquaint the Be-
" holder with the true Image of his own Complex-
" ion and Features; and often when a Glaſs has a
" rich and gaudy Frame, Childrens Eyes are ſo en-
" tertain'd and amuſed with it, that they are re-
" gardleſs of any thing elſe, and neglect to conſult
" the uſefuller Part, whoſe Office it is to diſcover
" to them themſelves; ſo when there is too much
" of Rhetorick in a Sermon, many, that ſhould not
" be Children, have their Attention not only ſo
" attracted, but ſo detain'd by that, that they are
" diverted from regarding the more inſtructive
" Part of the Diſcourſe; and the more witty and
" critical ſort of Auditors are ſo much more ac-
" cuſtom'd to judge of Sermons, than to judge of
" themſelves by them, that they deal with them,
" as if in this Glaſs a Man ſhould only praiſe or
" diſcommend the emboſs'd Images of the Frame,
" without caring to make uſe of the Glaſs it ſelf,
" to mend any thing he finds out of order about
" him; and it muſt be confeſs'd, tho' I grieve and
" bluſh it can be truly ſo, that it is but too often

" as the Scripture ſomewhere complains, *like People like Prieſt*; and that there is a ſort of Preachers " (for I am loth to call them Divines) who ap- " pear more ſolicitous to make their Expreſſions, " than their Hearers Good, and had much rather " hear their Praiſes than their Sighs; and that their " Auditors ſhould rather admire their good Lan- " guage, than follow their beſt Counſel: In a " Word, in ſuch kind of Sermons there is little " ſpoken either from the Heart or to the Heart, " the Orator and the Auditory tacitly agreeing to " deceive themſelves; and the Converſion of Sin- " ners being neither the Effect, nor the Aim of " ſuch florid, but unedifying Diſcourſes. The Bu- " ſineſs is tranſlated on both Sides, as if the Preacher " thought he had done his Part when he has ſhewn " his Wit, and the Hearers thought they had done " theirs, when they have commended it." Conſider, oh my Soul! that Devotion in hearing, and Practice afterwards, is the end of hearing. Attend to this at all times, and don't trifle in the Houſe of God, and in the Affairs of Eternity.

I purpoſe to employ ſome Time every Lord's Day Night, in reviewing what has paſs'd in the Day; in cenſuring what has been amiſs, working upon my Heart what I have heard, in ſuitable Confeſſions, Petitions and Praiſes, and eſpecially in the pleaſing Contemplations of the State above, where ſuch Work as I now blunder and ſtammer in, will be brought to its Perfection; and Sabbath-Religion, particularly that more eſſential Part of it, *Gratitude and Praiſe*, will be better underſtood by me. Lord! tune my Heart more and more for thy Work on Earth: Fit me for thy Day approaching: Make me glad with thy Countenance; and after a few Days Attendance more in thy outer Court, may I be admitted within the Vail, and

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make my Aſcriptions with the reſt of the Saints, *to him that ſits upon the Throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.*

SATURDAY Night, 6 a-Clock, before the Sacrament.

TO morrow is a very ſolemn Day, *the great Day of the Feaſt*; as the Jews us'd to call the laſt Day one of their Feſtivals. 'Tis a Sabbath Day, and a Sacrament Day. I ought, I am ſure, to make it a buſy Day, and oh! that I may find it a good and comfortable Day. Specimen III.

The Circumſtances of the preſent time naturally lead me to ſome Reflections, and further Reſolutions. (1.) I deſire to review the State of Things with me. I thank God for the Evidence I have of my Sincerity in the Chriſtian Profeſſion. I am not altogether at a Loſs and in the dark as to my State in general, and therefore ſuppoſe I have not Occaſion to go through the whole Proceſs of Examination, as ſometimes preſcrib'd in Books. I cannot think this neceſſary for every Chriſtian before every Sacrament; he ſhould rather live ſo as to be always fit for that ſolemn Ordinance, was it to be part of every Day's Work, or every Week's Work, as in the primitive Church. I deſire not to live a Stranger to my ſelf, but daily to obſerve my Heart, Frame and Walk; often to review it, and ſtate Accounts between God and my Soul. I bleſs God that this has been my Care, in ſome meaſure, and for the comfortable Evidence I have of Acceptance with him. Oh! that herein I may not be miſtaken. *Search me, oh God, and know my Heart, try me and know my Thoughts, and ſee if there be*

be any wicked Way in me, and lead me in the Way everlaſting.

Notwithſtanding, 'tis not unreaſonable, but what the Occaſion requires of me, to employ ſome Time in examining Things, and looking back on what has paſs'd this Week, this Month, and ſince the laſt Sacrament. How have I ſpent my Time——How have I improv'd my Sabbaths——How have I managed my Calling——How have I rul'd my Tongue——How have I govern'd my Affections, Paſſions and Appetites——How have I perform'd the Duties of Worſhip? Have I been conſtant, ſerious and devout therein? What Victory have I gain'd over my Infirmities, and particularly that which the laſt Sacrament-Day I ſaw Reaſon to confeſs with ſo much Reſentment, and that I had a ſpecial Reference to in my ſacramental Vows, and in my other Devotions at the Lord's Table, and of which I have a Note in my Diary. Oh! my Soul! inquire into theſe Things, and accordingly now addreſs thy ſelf to God.

(2.) I would endeavour to trim my Lamp, and get my Heart into a ſolemn ſerious Frame, that if the Miniſter ſhould be out of Frame, as it ſometimes happens to the beſt, I may ſupply that Defect by the Warmth and Intenſeneſs of my Devotion; to which Purpoſe I determine this Night to ſpend a fit Proportion of Time in ſuitable Exerciſes of Religion; and to be as early to morrow Morning, as the State of my Health and bodily Spirits will allow, in my Cloſet. Lord, grant me thy Preſence, and aſſiſt me by thy Grace!

(3.) I would endeavour eſpecially to preſerve an holy rejoycing Frame through the Work of the next Day, and particularly when at the Lord's Table. How great a Dignity and Privilege is it to ſit among the Saints there! Whilſt Men of a profane

ſane and worldly Spirit neglect and deſpiſe theſe Enjoyments, I would glory and triumph in them. Lord! I deſerve not to eat the Crumbs that fall from thy Table, and behold! I am entertain'd amongſt thy Children, have the Covenant of thy Grace ſeal'd and confirm'd to me, and receive an Inveſtiture in all the rich and tranſcendent Privileges of it. Infinite Grace! I know not which to admire moſt, the Love that made the Feaſt, or that has made me a Gueſt. O! my Soul, rejoice in the Lord: Tho' the Fig-tree don't bloſſom, yet will I rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of my Salvation. And oh! that thoſe woeful Infirmities, that hang about me, were out of the Way, that I could get more above them: However they need not hinder my Gratitude and rejoicing; I know they are not allow'd. I am in purſuit of a Conqueſt, and ſhortly the Victory ſhall be compleat. And in the mean time I have in the Ordinance before me, no ſmall Encouragement: The Cup I there take, is the New Teſtament in the Blood of Chriſt, *ſhed for Remiſſion of Sins.* Lord! I'll ſet the Sufferings of my Saviour againſt my Sins. I am a Sinner, but I'll plead the Mercy of thy Nature, the Grace of thy Covenant, and the Blood of Atonement, and deſire with Triumph again to lay my Hand on the Head of the great Victim. *Who ſhall lay any thing to the Charge of God's Elect? 'tis Chriſt that died*——

(4.) I purpoſe and reſolve upon a Life of holy Obedience and greater Exactneſs therein; and in order to it, would now peruſe my Diary, obſerve how Things have been with me, conſider how at preſent they are, and contrive how they may be better for the future; Lord, help me by thy Grace! Be with me in my future Conduct! Grant me thy Preſence in the Work of to-morrow at thy Table,

Table, and in all the Duties of the Day. May I with Freedom and Chearfulneſs go through the ſeveral Services of it, and in all be accepted in the Beloved.

The Pleaſure of Worſhip in Proſpect and Review.

SATURDAY Night, 7 a-Clock.

Specimen IV. I Have another Lord's Day before me, and deſire now to ſet my ſelf to prepare for it. I have known ſome Chriſtians, particularly one, who us'd to rejoice when in the Circumſtances I am now in, *viz.* taking leave of the World on Saturday Night. He would meet and welcome the Sabbath with a Gladneſs and ſort of Triumph, and was us'd to part with it, and return to the World again on Monday Morning with a ſort of Reluctancy. The like happy Frame the Pſalmiſt manifeſtly diſcovers, *Pſal.* cxxii. 1. *I was glad when they ſaid unto me, let us go into the Houſe of the Lord*; which is alſo expreſs'd, *Pſal.* xlii. 1—4. *Pſal.* lxiii. 1, 2, 3. *Pſal.* lxxxiv. 1—4. And as he long'd for the Solemnities of God's Houſe, and was delighted in them, ſo it is plain, he had a Pleaſure in the Review of them: *A Day in thy Courts,* ſays he, *is better than a thouſand,* Pſal. lxxxiv. 10.

How many, alas! are there, who are utterly Strangers to ſuch a Temper? Who have no Value for a Sabbath, nothing depending at ſuch a Time that they reckon of Moment and Conſequence, and who have no true Concern and Solicitude of Mind about the Tranſactions of it. Cuſtom brings them to the Places of publick Worſhip: Some of them may vouchſafe a ſuperficial Attention, and now and then commend the Sermon, eſpecially if the

the Preacher acts the Orator; but ordinarily their Humour leads them to cenſure, and, it may be, deſpiſe both Sermon and Preacher: And as to the great and weighty Concerns of the Day, ſucceſs in Worſhip, ſanctifying God in his Houſe and Ordinances, maintaining a devout Frame of Mind, Intercourſe with God, and the like, theſe are Things they know nothing of, nor do they trouble themſelves with.

And oh! my Soul, what Reaſon have I to complain here? How little do I know of the devout Frame, as this way expreſs'd, *viewing and reviewing the Sabbath with Pleaſure and Delight!* Am I not ſometimes ready to ſay, *What a Wearineſs is it?* when will the Sabbath be gone? Inſtead of triumphing in the Work, am dull and heartleſs, and often gloomy and dejected at the Cloſe of it. Endeavour that this Matter may be mended, and that thou may'ſt welcome the Sabbath, delight in the Services of it, and look back upon them when they are over, with Complacency and Rejoicing. Oh! when ſhall it be thus with me, more thus, always thus? To promote ſuch an happy Temper, ſeveral Things are neceſſary.

'Tis neceſſary that I have an holy, ſanctified Heart, otherwiſe I can never ſanctify God's Day, nor delight in his Work, but ſhall be *Piſcis in arido*, out of my Element, when employ'd therein; nor is the firſt vital Principle of Grace in the bare Eſſence or Being of it ſufficient; but ſome Improvement and Advance muſt be endeavour'd, giving the Soul a ſtrong Byaſs towards God and Religion.

'Tis neceſſary I have ſome Experience of the Comforts of Worſhip, of Intercourſe and Converſe with God in his Houſe and Ordinances; that I have, ſometimes at leaſt, taſted of theſe refin'd, ſublime

ſublime Delights. The *Pſalmiſt* had ſeen the Power and Glory of God in his Sanctuary; not only an external *Shechinah*, but a moral *Shechinah*, as I may call it; the Glory of God's ſpecial Preſence, filling and refreſhing his Soul, ſatisfying him as with Marrow and Fatneſs; and hence he cries out, *My Soul thirſteth for thee, my fleſh longeth for thee*, Pſal. lxiii. 1. He that has drank of the Rivers of God's Pleaſure in his Houſe, will find his Mouth in ſome Meaſure put out of Taſte with other Things: And as without this Experience the Work of the Sabbath, and particularly of publick Ordinances, will be dull and heavy, want its attractive Excellencies, ſo it is not poſſible I ſhould much deſire it: If I have never found Delight in it, I ſhall not find much longing after it.

'Tis neceſſary that I conſider this Frame and Bent of Mind *(a Pleaſure in the Proſpect and Review of Sabbath-work)* as a great and valuable Attainment, and accordingly be ſolicitous about it, often and earneſtly pray for it; and if I ſtill find my ſelf defective, ſet Time apart for more ſolemn Prayer and Faſting, with a ſpecial Reference hereto. Lord, quicken my Zeal in this particular!

'Tis neceſſary that I be diligent and attentive, and keep a ſtrict Watch over my Heart and Frame through the Day; that I be mortified to the World, get it out of my Thoughts and Affections; that I be much in the Angelick Work of Praiſe; that I ſet my ſelf apart intirely for the great Buſineſs of Religion, and on this Occaſion eſpecially *be in the Fear of the Lord all the Day long*.

O my God aſſiſt me by thy Grace herein! Grant me more abundant Communications of thy Spirit; tune this poor dull Heart for thy Service; endear thy Day and the Work of it to my Soul; that I may call the Sabbath *a Delight, the Holy*

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of the Lord, honourable, and be glad when they ſay unto me, *Let us go into the Houſe of the Lord.*

LORD'S-DAY Night, 7 a-Clock.

THIS Day I heard a Sermon from *Luke* xvi. 25. Abraham *ſaid, Son, remember that thou in thy life-time receivedſt thy good Things, and likewiſe* Lazarus *evil Things, but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.* Specimen V.

After a fit Introduction, and ſome Remarks upon the Parable in general, it was obſerv'd, that in the Text, which is Part of *Abraham*'s Anſwer to the rich Man, we have (1.) The Compellation or the Name he gives him, *Son, Son, remember that,* &c. He doth not revile him, nor call him hard Names, how wicked and unworthy ſoever he had been: Whence one obſerves, as was ſuggeſted, how indecent and unbecoming it is for Chriſtians to treat one another with Terms of Contempt and Bitterneſs. The *Angel* would not bring a railing Accuſation againſt the Devil; and here *Abraham* calleth the rich Senſualiſt *Son.* Reproachful Language never ſerv'd a good Cauſe, and very ill becomes the Mouth of a good Man. Learn, O my Soul! ſome Inſtruction from hence: I could not but think this a pertinent Remark; pertinent to the Caſe of others, to my own Caſe often. Lord, help me to profit by it. (2.) We have alſo the different States and Conditions of the Perſons concern'd in the Parable, both here and hereafter: One had *his good Things here,* the other *his evil Things here*; hereafter the one was *comforted,* the other *tormented.* (3.) An Admonition to the rich Man, to call to mind the former State of Things, both with him and *Lazarus*; and this as one Ground and Reaſon of their different

State

State hereafter, *Remember that thou in thy Life-time receivedſt thy good Things; and likewiſe Lazarus evil Things, but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.* He puts him in mind that he had already had the Happineſs he choſe, and reſted in, the good Things he valued moſt; whereas pious *Lazarus* had liv'd in Poverty, Diſgrace and outward Sorrow; and thereupon he appeals to him, as it were, concerning the Equity of that Diſtinction, that was *now* made between them: *Now he is comforted, and thou art tormented:* As if he had ſaid, Is it not reaſonable it ſhould be ſo? *&c.*

Several Things were obſerv'd from hence, and inſiſted upon, particularly, (1.) That often bad Men have a large Meaſure of good Things in this Life, and good Men a large Meaſure of evil Things. This was explain'd and limited in ſeveral Propoſitions: Some Account was given of the good Things of the one, and the evil Things of the other, in the preſent Life. (2.) It was obſerv'd, that 'tis but juſt, a Diſtinction ſhould be made in favour of good Men hereafter, that the Wicked who have receiv'd their good Things in this Life, ſhould be tormented in the other Life; and that good Men, who have receiv'd their evil Things here, ſhould be comforted hereafter. The Equity of this was argued, and from the whole the Providence of God vindicated from a common Objection, grounded upon the preſent Proſperity of the wicked, and the Sufferings of good Men. Some Advantages were taken notice of that good Men have at preſent: They have many ſpiritual good Things with their outward evil Things, and then infinite will be their Advantage hereafter! Whilſt the Wicked are tormented, they ſhall be comforted. O my Soul! endeavour a ſuitable Improvement of what thou haſt heard: Never more envy the Proſperity of the Wicked.

Wicked. This was urged upon thee, recollect what was offer'd: Their Happineſs is but a Blaze and a Dream. 'Tis a poor Relief to the rich Man in Hell, that he once liv'd in Pomp and Pleaſure. Chearfully ſubmit to ſuch evil Things, as by the Providence of God may be thy Lot and Trial here. There is a great Deal of Wiſdom, and even Tenderneſs and Love in the Appointment of them, as was ſuggeſted; they will ſoon be over, and thou ſhalt be comforted. Help me, O my God! to bear thy Diſcipline with a calm chearful Mind, waiting for thy Salvation: Direct me in the Choice of an Happineſs: May I not have my Portion in this Life, my good Things here? I leave the ſumptuous Fare, the Purple and fine Linen to ſuch as know nothing of better Enjoyments; 'tis enough if I have thy Supports in all the evil Things thro' which I paſs now, and be comforted hereafter.

LORD'S-DAY Night, 7 a-Clock.

I This Day heard a Sermon upon *John* xii. 26. *If any Man ſerve me, let him follow me.* *Specimen Sixth.*

After the Diviſion and Explication of the Words, as uſual in Sermons, the Example of Chriſt was ſet before us for our Imitation. It was promis'd, that he being an *extraordinary* Perſon, his Example muſt be ſuppos'd to have ſomething *extraordinary* in it; and indeed was in ſundry Inſtances above our Imitation. This was illuſtrated and ſhewn in ſeveral Particulars; but tho' we cannot imitate him throughout, in many Things we may and ought. Some Things he did to confirm our Faith, beget in us Reverence of himſelf; as when he rebuk'd the Winds and the Seas, walked upon the Water, open'd the Eyes of the Blind by a Touch, and rais'd the

Dead by a Word; other Things he did for our Imitation, *leaving us an Example that we ſhould tread in his Steps*, 1 Pet. ii. 21.

Several Particulars were propos'd, wherein we are to follow him, as (1) in Holineſs. He was eminently holy, without the leaſt Taint or Pollution: Holy in his Birth, and in all the Actions of his Life; hence he is call'd the *holy Child Jeſus*, Acts iv. 27. *The holy one and the juſt*, Acts iii. 14. He was holy in his Thoughts, Words, Affections, Actions: Holy in all manner of Converſation; none ever convinc'd him of Sin, and herein we are to follow him, 1 *Pet.* i. 5. (2) We are to follow him in his early Piety, *Luke* ii. 46, 52. (3) In his filial Obedience and dutiful Regard to his Parents, *Luke* ii. 51. *John* xix. 26, 27. (4) In his Devotion, particularly his Prayerfulneſs, *Mat.* xiv. 23. *Mark* i. 35. *Luke* vi. 12. xxi. 44. *Heb.* v. 7. (5) We are to follow him in his Conſtancy, Diligence and Zeal in the Work of God, *John* ix. 4. *John* iv. 32, 34. (6) In his ſteady Regard to the Glory of God in all he did, *John* viii. 50. vii. 18. xii. 27, 28. (7) In his Contempt of this World, the Honours and all the Enjoyment of it, *Mat.* iv. 8, 10. *Luke* ix. 58. viii. 3. (8) We are to follow him in his Humility, Patience, Meekneſs, *&c. John* xiii. 5. 1 Pet. ii. 23. *Mat.* xi. 29. xxvi. 43. (9) In his charitable forgiving Temper, even towards his worſt Enemies, *Luke* xxiii. 34. (10) In his full Reſignation to the Will of God, *Luke* xxii. 42. (11) In his peaceable Conduct and Deportment in the World, *Mat.* xii. 19. xvii. 27. (12) In his Beneficence and Readineſs to do good, both to the Souls and Bodies of Men, *Mat.* xv. 32. *Acts* x. 38. (13) In his Compoſure and Evenneſs of Mind under all Occurrences. He could go through any Buſtle and Hurry of Buſineſs, and never be ruffled;

bear the Huſanna's and Applauſes of ſome, and the rudeſt Inſults of others, without loſing his Temper. (14) In the Spirituality of his Frame: He was always breathing ſomething of God and Heaven, improving every Occaſion to the Purpoſes of Religion; witneſs his Parables and Diſcourſes with his Diſciples and others he converſed with. (15) We are to follow him in his fervent Deſires after Heaven, and the Bleſſedneſs thereof, and the conſtant Reference he had thereto, *Heb.* xii. 2. *John* xvii. 5.

The Duty and Reaſonableneſs of following Chriſt was prov'd by ſeveral Conſiderations; and as I am convinc'd of my Obligations hereunto, I deſire to act accordingly. Lord, help me by thy Grace. Theſe are indeed known Truths, what I have often read in Books, and heard from the Pulpit, but notwithſtanding that, I don't think myſelf the leſs concern'd to attend them: And as I have endeavour'd to recollect them as they have been this Day ſet before me, I would endeavour to make the Practice of them the great Care and Buſineſs of my Life. A Chriſtian is a Follower of Chriſt, and the more exactly he follows him, the better Chriſtian he is. We are predeſtinated and appointed to be conform'd to and bear his Image, *Rom.* viii. 29. And indeed in this Conformity, in the ſeveral divine Virtues and Graces that have been mentioned, not only our preſent Meetneſs for Heaven conſiſts, but Heaven it ſelf very much conſiſts in it: *When he appears, we ſhall be like him,* 1 John iii. 2. O, my Soul! frequently contemplate this beautiful glorious Example; often bring it into View, and ſet it before thee; examine and govern thy Heart, Frame and Actions by it. In any doubtful Caſes, or when under Temptation, ask thyſelf how Chriſt would have acted in ſuch Circumſtances, and act accordingly.

Lord! impreſs my Mind more deeply with the Rules of thy Word, and the Example of my great Maſter. I bewail it, that I am ſo unlike him, that I have followed him no more cloſely: Transform me more and more by the renewing of my Mind; bleſs the Truths that I have heard this Day; teach me to profit by them: May I in all Things approve myſelf to thee in well-doing, and may the ſame Mind be in me that was alſo in Chriſt.

LORD'S-DAY Night, 6 a-Clock.

Specimen Seven. I Have paſs'd ſo far through another Sabbath; but alas! how little Improvement! how little Converſe have I had with God in his Houſe and Worſhip? How little acquainted am I with the true Spirit of Devotion? I heard a Sermon from that Text *Pſ.* xxxii. 10. *Many Sorrows ſhall be to the Wicked, but he that truſteth in the Lord, Mercy ſhall compaſs him about:* In which the Miſeries of a vicious ſinful Life were diſplay'd, ſuch as reſpect the Body and the Soul, Time and Eternity; but how little was I affected? I am ſure not ſuitably to the Subject and the Importance of the Diſcourſe; I would recover what I can of it now, and preach it over again to myſelf.

The Truth is, I have trifled and been very much out of Frame through the greateſt Part of this Day. I was dull and unattentive at Prayer; at leaſt my Attention was often dropp'd; and tho' it be not uſual with me, it ſo happen'd to day, that *I fell aſleep* under the Sermon, and this ſtupid negligent Frame I continued thro' the other part of the Day, the Afternoon: I ſlept ſeveral times during the Sermon, and more than once at Prayer. Wretch as I am; was this like a Worſhiper? Herein I afronte

fronted the great God, his attending Angels, the Miniſter that officiated, the whole Congregation; deſerted and ſlighted the Devotion of it; griev'd the Serious and Devout that obſerv'd me, ſet an ill Example to the Careleſs, and loſt my own Part of the Bleſſing. Have Mercy upon me, O my God! I abhor myſelf, and repent in Duſt and Aſhes.

Nor need I be very much at a Loſs to account for this woful Miſcarriage. I have of late loſt ſomething of my Tenderneſs of Conſcience, Warmth and Zeal in Religion. I have been more ſuperficial in ſecret Duties, and in general leſs ſerious in my Courſe and Walk than I us'd to be. I ſpent no Time laſt Night, in preparing for the Sabbath, and begging a Bleſſing upon the Work of it. I trifled away ſome Hours, after the neceſſary Buſineſs of the Day was over, in Converſation and——with——I lay in Bed this Morning till it was almoſt Time to go to publick Worſhip: And tho' according to Cuſtom I pray'd, it was very ſhort, and very cold, and indeed to no Purpoſe. I went to the Houſe of God in a careleſs light Frame; talk'd all the way, as I went, about mere Impertinencies with—When I came to the Place of Worſhip, I had no ſerious Thoughts of God, of the Awfulneſs of the Preſence I was in, and Importance of the Work I was about; never look'd up to Heaven for Aſſiſtance, nor endeavour'd to ſet myſelf on my Guard: Horrid Stupidity and Non-attention! How often have I ſmarted for ſuch Folly, and yet not reclaim'd? *Bray a Fool in a Mortar, yet will not his Fooliſhneſs depart from him.* Lord, I would take Shame to myſelf, and humble myſelf before thee; rouze my Reſolutions of more Watchfulneſs and Care for the future: For thy Name ſake, O Lord, pardon mine Iniquity, for it is great.

SATURDAY *Night Six a-Clock.*

Eighth Specimen. Bp. Leighton's *Preface before one of his Sermons,* p. 39.

" THERE is no Exerciſe ſo delightful to " thoſe that are truly Godly, as the ſo-
" lemn Worſhip of God, if they find his power-
" ful and ſenſible Preſence in it; and indeed there
" is nothing on Earth more like to Heaven, than
" that is. But when he withdraws himſelf, and
" withholds the Influence and Breathings of his
" Spirit in his Service, then good Souls find no-
" thing more lifeleſs and uncomfortable. But there
" is this Difference, even at ſuch a Time, betwixt
" them and thoſe that have no ſpiritual Life in
" them at all, that they find and are ſenſible of
" this Difference, whereas the other know not what
" it means. And for the moſt part, the greateſt
" Number of thoſe that meet together with a Pro-
" feſſion to Worſhip God, yet are ſuch as do not
" underſtand this Difference. Cuſtom and Forma-
" lity draws many to the ordinary Places of pub-
" lick Worſhip, and fills too much of the room.
" And ſometimes Novelty and Curioſity, to Places
" not ordinary, has a large Share. But how few
" are there that come on Purpoſe to meet with
" God in his Worſhip, and to find his Power in
" it, ſtrengthening their weak Faith, and weakening
" their ſtrong Corruptions; affording them Pro-
" viſion of ſpiritual Strength and Comfort againſt
" Times of Trial; and in a Word, advancing them
" ſome Steps forward in their Journey towards Hea-
" ven, where Perfection and Happineſs dwell?
" Certainly theſe ſweet Efforts are to be found
" in theſe Ordinances, if we would look after
" them. Let it grieve us then, that we have ſo
" often loſt our Labour in the Worſhip of God
" through our own Neglect, and intreat the Lord
" that

" that at this time he would not ſend us empty " away; for how weak ſoever the Means be, if he " put to his Strength the work ſhall be done, in " ſome Meaſure, to his Glory and our Edifica- " tion."

Lord! may I find thy powerful ſenſible Preſence in thy Houſe and Ordinances; in Prayer, Hearing, and every Part of divine Worſhip. How often, alas! do I want it? This Comfort however I have, that I know when I want it, find and feel the want; know when thou art preſent and when thou art abſent. I bleſs thee I am not wholly inſenſible of theſe Things, and unconcern'd about them; but that ſometimes I have met with thee in the Solemnities of thy Service.

Lord! afford me the powerful Influences of thy Grace more and more; and thereof particularly favour me with this great Bleſſing the enſuing Day; I would now beſpeak thy Preſence; pray, prepare, and wait for it: Make me joyful in the Houſe of Prayer, glad with thy Countenance; may I ſee *thy Power and Glory* in thy Sanctuary; without which it will have no Glory.

LORDS-DAY *Night Seven a-Clock.*

" BLeſſed are they that dwell in thy Houſe, *Ninth Speci-*
" ſaith the Pſalmiſt, and he adds this Rea- *men.*
" ſon, *They will be ſtill praiſing thee.* There is in-
" deed always in God's Houſe, both fit Oppor-
" tunity and plentiful Matter of his Praiſes. But
" the greateſt Number of thoſe that frequent his
" Houſe, do not *dwell in it*, their Delight and
" Affection is not there, therefore they cannot
" praiſe him. They come in as Strangers, and have

" no Skill of the Songs of Praiſe. Yea and the
" very Children of the Family, that Worſhip in
" Spirit and in Truth, find their Inſtruments (their
" Hearts) very often quite out of tune for Praiſes;
" and ſometimes moſt of all, when Praiſes are moſt
" requiſite. They ſtill find ſuch abundant Cauſe
" of Complaint in themſelves, weighing down their
" Spirits, that they can hardly at all wind them up
" to magnify the God of their Mercies. If we
" would take a View, and look back upon our Car-
" riage one Day, in the Preſence of God, who
" among us would not find much Work for ſad
" Thoughts? Would not one find that he had an
" hard and ſtony Heart? Another a Light, uncon-
" ſtant, wandering Heart, to complain of? A third
" an unbelieving Heart, and ſome of all theſe.
" And they (if ſuch there be) that have both deep-
" ly ſorrow'd and been largely comforted, will poſ-
" ſibly, for all that, upon former ſad Experience,
" be full of Fears and Jealouſies, that this ſweet
" Temper will not be of long Continuance; that
" e'er long the World, or ſome Luſt, will find or
" make a Way to creep in, and baniſh theſe heaven-
" ly Thoughts, and trouble that Peace and Joy
" that accompanies them? Yet notwithſtanding all
" theſe Cauſes of Grief or Fear, our Cauſes of
" Praiſe are both more and greater; and there is
" no Reaſon that the Senſe of our own Evil ſhould
" prejudice the Acknowledgment of God's Good-
" neſs; yea, rather it ſhould ſtir us up to extol it
" ſo much the more. Ceaſe not to bemoan the
" Evils of your own Hearts; but withal forget not
" to magnify the Riches of his Grace towards you.
" Theſe two will not hinder one another, but the
" due Intermixture of them will make a very good
" Harmony; and the Fruit of them will be this, you
" ſhall have ſtill more Cauſe to praiſe, and leſs to

" com-

" complain. When the Lord ſhall find your humble
" Acknowledgements of his Grace, he will delight
" to beſtow more Grace upon you, and will ſub-
" due thoſe Iniquities for you, which you can-
" not; and tho' he is pleaſed to do it but gradu-
" ally, by little and little, yet in the End the Con-
" queſt ſhall be full.

Bp. Leighton's *Preface before a Sermon.* p. 141.

O my God! impreſs and form my Heart for the Work of Praiſe, eſpecially on the Day of Praiſe; how much am I reprobate to this good Work? I have been about it this Day, but alas how low my Notes, how flat my Devotions? The Truth of it is, when Things are beſt with me, I can't allow my ſelf to call ſuch dull broken Services as mine, ſuch languid faint Eſſays, *Praiſes*; and therefore, after I have been attempting the high Employment, and blundering in it, I find, methinks, a Sort of Satisfaction in reſerving it to the State above, *then I ſhall praiſe him:* In the mean while I would be doing ſomething; aiming at ſomething, till the bleſſed time is come when I ſhall be able to ſing the Song of *Zion*, and no more hang my Harp upon the Willows. Lord, may I now learn a little of the *new Song*, ſo well underſtood above; teach me ſome Notes of it; I would be daily exercis'd in it, eſpecially on thy Day; and tho' I can't yet wholly put off my Sackcloth, nor will the Noiſe of the Shout of Joy be always diſcern'd from the Noiſe of Weeping, I deſire notwithſtanding all Diſcouragements, to be a Student in thy Praiſe; to make it my great Subject on ſolemn Days eſpecially; to *enter into thy Gates with Thanksgiving, and into thy Courts with Praiſe*; O may *I dwell in thy Houſe and ſtill praiſe thee.*

THURSDAY

THURSDAY *Night Six a-Clock.*

Tenth Specimen.

I This Day heard a Sermon from *Pſal.* xv. 2. *And ſpeaketh the Truth in his Heart.* After ſome Account of the Penman, Occaſion and Deſign of the Pſalm, the Words were conſider'd as an Anſwer to the Queſtion propoſed in the firſt Verſe; *Lord, who ſhall abide in thy Tabernacle, who ſhall dwell in thy holy Hill?* And this Obſervation was made from them *(viz.)* That 'tis a neceſſary Part of the Character of an approved Worſhipper of God here, who alſo is deſign'd for Heaven hereafter, that *he ſpeaketh the Truth in his Heart.* The Method was (I.) To explain the Character, *He ſpeaketh the Truth in his Heart.* (II.) To confirm the Propoſition, That this is a neceſſary Part of a good Man's Character. (III.) To make Application.

1ſt, To explain the Character, *He ſpeaketh the Truth in his Heart:* And here it was ſuggeſted, that the Thing intended is Integrity and Sincerity in our Language; expreſſing the genuine Sentiments of the Mind without Diſguiſe: To illuſtrate which ſeveral Things were obſerved, as (1.) That a Perſon may ſpeak the Truth in the Heart, when, ſtrictly, there is not Truth in the Words; as when he reports a miſtaken Matter of Fact after another; if he believes what he ſaith to be true, he's not guilty of a Lie, even though it be falſe; though in this Caſe we ought to be cautious, and not too haſtily take up a Report. We muſt never aſſert poſitively what we don't know to be true, or have not ſufficient Reaſon to think ſo: And ſtill greater Caution is to be uſed, when others may receive Prejudice by a miſtaken, and falſe Report. (2.) A Perſon may ſpeak what is Fact and true, and yet not ſpeak the Truth in his Heart; as when he thinks

thinks what he affirms as Fact is not Fact, though really it be Fact: *He ſpeaks not Truth in his Heart*, though there be Truth in his Words. (3.) There are ſeveral Modes of Expreſſions that carry in them an Appearance of Falſhood, and yet are not ſo; nor do they at all partake of the Nature of a Lie; as Metaphors, Ironies, Hyperboles, *&c.* (4.) A Perſon may act contrary to his Words and Declarations, and yet not be chargeable with Lying; as when we declare our Purpoſe to do, or not to do a Thing, and afterwards ſee Reaſon to go contrary to the Declaration; in this Caſe there may be no Violation of the Laws of Truth. Some Limitations and Cautions were added here, which I deſire not to forget: For Inſtance, that what we ſay and expreſs, as our Purpoſe be truly ſo, and contain the preſent Senſe of our Minds, that if the Declaration be not raſh, and that if we don't recede from the Reſolution or Purpoſe we have declared, without good Reaſon. In buying and ſelling, for Example, we ſhould not be haſty to declare we will give no more, or take no leſs; much leſs declare this to ſerve ourſelves in the Bargain, when we have no ſuch Meaning; this is Lying, and fraudulent Lying. O my Soul! be on thy Watch here: So much Regard is to be had to Veracity, and ſo much Diſtance kept from the very Appearance of a Lie, that I would never make Declarations of this Kind, till I have weigh'd Matters well, and my Reſolution is fix'd; and when I have detain'd myſelf, I would ordinarily ſtand to my Word, and not reverſe it upon every little Inconvenience, and never without explaining myſelf to thoſe with whom I am concern'd, *Pſal.* xv. 4. (5.) The chief Requiſite here is, *that there be a Correſpondence between the inward Sentiments and the outward Expreſſions.* A Lie is, *quando Os & Cor diſſentiunt,*

diſſentiunt, when we ſpeak one Thing and think another: And on the other Hand, we ſpeak the Truth in our Heart, when the Tongue is *Index Animi*, doth truly interpret the Mind.

And here we were admoniſh'd, that this ſacred Regard to Truth is to be preſerv'd always, eſpecially from Narratives, or Repreſentations of Facts; when we relate any thing as ſaid or done by ourſelves or others, we ſhould ſpeak with Sincerity or Simplicity; without any romantick Addition to embelliſh the Story, and give it a Turn to our own Purpoſe. Oh! may I be cautious in this Particular, and not ſuffer Pride, Malice, Envy, or any other ſinful Paſſion, to byaſs me in my Story; but whenever I repreſent any thing as ſaid or done, I would ſtrictly keep to the Laws of Truth. The ſame Regard to Truth is to be preſerv'd in Promiſes, and in Matters of Teſtimony, or in Witneſsbearing: Oh! may I never take up a Reproach againſt my Neighbour, much leſs invent one!

The next Particular inſiſted upon, was to confirm the Obſervation, and ſhew that this is a neceſſary Part of the Character of an approved Worſhipper of God here, who is alſo deſign'd for Heaven hereafter, that *he ſpeaketh the Truth in his Heart*. The Text was urged to this Purpoſe: It was urged that Veracity and Truth is repreſented as a Branch of the new Nature, *Eph.* iv. 24, 25. *Eph.* v. 9. And farther, that Liars are expreſly excluded Heaven, *Rev.* xxi. 8, 27.

In the Application, among other Things, ſeveral Arguments were offer'd againſt the Sin of Lying, as being the direct Reverſe of the Grace here recommended; which I deſire now to Review, and always keep in Mind. It was argued that Truth is the Nature of God, and Lying moſt contrary thereto, *Heb.* vi. 18. 'Tis, among thoſe Things, that

that he has a diſtinguiſh'd Abhorrence of, and that are *an Abomination to the Lord*, Prov. vi. 17, 19. Prov. xii. 22. O my Soul! dread that which will make thee unlike God, and hateful to him. It was argued, that Lying is a groſs Abuſe of the noble Organ of Speech, the Tongue, ſo often called our *Glory*; that 'tis an Enemy to Society, and tends not only to diſturb, but diſſolve it, as it deſtroys mutual Truſt and Confidence, without which Society can't long ſubſiſt; that 'tis in itſelf infamous, and generally ſo accounted: Hence 'tis that the Imputation of a Lie is ſo much reſented. It was urged, that the Light of Nature condemns it, and that it has been inveigh'd againſt by ſome of the wiſer Heathens, *Tit.* i. 12. that 'tis particularly and eminently the Sin of the Devil; when he firſt diſcover'd himſelf to the World, it was with a Lye in his Mouth, *Gen.* iii. 4. And our Saviour repreſents him as *the Father of Lies and Liars*, John viii. 44. A Liar is a Child of the Devil, his Offering, partakes of his Nature, and bears his Image in a very lively Manner. It was argued, that a lying Tongue is a certain Mark of an unrenew'd, unſanctify'd Heart, *Eph.* iv. 25. *Col.* iii. 9. *Prov.* xiii. 5. that it has a great deal of Infidelity and Atheiſm in it: We would not lie, if we were aſſured thoſe we convers'd with could diſcern our Thoughts, and diſcover the Baſeneſs. God ſees in ſecret, knows what's conceal'd, and yet we regard it not; an Intimation that either we don't believe his Preſence, or don't ſtand in awe of his Authority. To conclude, as Lying is the Character of a wicked Man, ſo it effectually, and for ever, ſhuts the Soul out of Heaven. This is imply'd in the Text, and expreſſed in other Scriptures in the plaineſt Terms, *Rev.* xxi. 27. *Rev.* xxii. 15. *Rev.* xxi. 8. *Prov.* xv. 5, 9.

O my

O my Soul! receive the Admonition that has been given thee; ſtudy Truth in the inward Parts; let Integrity and Truth always accompany thee, and preſerve thee; ſpeak the Truth in thy Heart. I am thankful for any Conviction and Senſe I have of the Evil of Lying; Lord, increaſe my Abhorrence of it: As a farther Aſſiſtance and Help againſt this mean, ſordid, pernicious Vice, I would endeavour and reſolve, in Purſuit of the Directions laid before us in the Sermon, to mortify thoſe Paſſions and Corruptions from whence this Sin of Lying more ordinarily flows, and which are the chief Occaſion of it: As *out of the Heart proceedeth evil Thoughts*, Matt. xv. 19. ſo from the ſame Fountain proceed evil Words. And I would, with the greateſt Zeal, ſet myſelf againſt ſuch Corruptions, as upon Obſervation I find more commonly betray me into this Iniquity: Pride often indites our Speech, and coins many a Lie; ſo Envy, Covetouſneſs, Malice, *&c.* I would endeavour to cleanſe myſelf from all this Filthineſs: There never will be a regular Tongue while there is an unmortified Heart. If I love the World inordinately, 'tis a thouſand to one I ſhall be often ſtretching a Point to promote a worldly Intereſt; and if I hate my Brother, 'tis the ſame Odds I ſhall reproach him. Lord, help me to purge the Fountain, and then the Streams will be pure. When the Spring of a Clock, and all the Movements are right, the Hand will go right; and ſo 'tis here. The Tongue follows the inward Inclination. I would reſolve to do nothing that may need a Lie. If *Gehazi*'s Covetouſneſs had not ſhamed him, he had not wanted a Lie to excuſe him. *He that walks uprightly, walks ſurely* and ſafely in this, as well as other Reſpects, *Prov.* x. 9. May I do nothing that's diſhonourable and mean, nothing that can't bear the Light, and then I ſhall have

have little Temptation to Lying. I would endeavour for a lively Senſe of the Eye of God upon me, acting and ſpeaking in his Preſence. Lord, I deſire to ſet thee always before me; thou underſtandeſt my Thoughts as perfectly as others do my Words. I would conſider before I ſpeak, and not ſpeak much or raſhly, *Prov.* xxix. 20. I would often think of the Severity of a future Judgment, when every Secret ſhall be made manifeſt, and the Hypocrite and Liar expoſed before Angels and Men. Laſtly, I would frequently beg divine Aſſiſtance herein, *Pſal.* cxix. 29. *Prov.* xxx. 8.

O my God! help me in my future Conduct, remove from me the Way of Lying; may the Law of Kindneſs and Truth be in my Tongue; may I *take Heed to* my *Ways*, that I *ſin not with* my *Tongue*. I bewail my paſt Miſcarriages in this Reſpect, and flee to thy Mercy through the Blood of Chriſt: Bleſs to me the Inſtructions that have been this Day given me; let no Iniquity prevail againſt me; *keep back thy Servant from preſumptuous Sins, and cleanſe me from* ſecret Faults. I commit my Thoughts, Deſires, and Tongue to thy Conduct and Government; may I think and act in thy Fear, and always ſpeak the Truth in my Heart.

THURSDAY *Night Six a-Clock.*

I Was this Day attending publick Worſhip; the Miniſter preach'd from *Matt.* vii. 12. *Therefore, all Things, whatſoever ye would that Men ſhould do to you, do ye even ſo to them; for this is the Law and the Prophets.* As I often found myſelf touch'd by the Diſcourſe, cenſur'd and convinc'd; I deſire now

now to recollect what I can, and make Application to my own Soul. Lord, aſſiſt me by thy Grace.

The Words were conſider'd as an admirable Rule preſcribed by our Saviour, for the due ordering our Conduct and Behaviour towards our Neighbour; touching which, it was obſerv'd, that this Rule is not only agreeable to the Law of Nature, but a Dictate of it: It ſeems written upon the Heart and Conſciences of all Men, and what every one, that underſtands and conſiders it, aſſents to off Hand. Some of the heathen Moraliſts, that know nothing of the Bible, diſcover'd the Equity of this Maxim, and have recommended it. *Diogenes Laertius* tells us, in the Life of *Ariſtotle*, that he being asked how Men ſhould demean themſelves towards Friends, anſwer'd; as they would wiſh their Friends ſhould carry towards them. *Iſocrates* frequently touches the ſame Rule. Among his Admonitions to young Men, this is one; manage thy Anger towards thoſe that offend, as thou wouldſt judge becoming in others towards thyſelf offending. Again, be thou ſuch towards thy Parents, as thou would'ſt wiſh thy Children ſhould be towards thee: And elſewhere, hereby thou wilt very much raiſe thy Reputation, if it ſhall appear, thou doſt not thoſe Things thyſelf, thou would'ſt reprehend in others doing them. This was remark'd to ſignify, that the Rule here preſcrib'd has ſo much of natural Equity in it, that it has the Suffrage and Vote of all Mankind; however they practiſe, they can't but agree, that they ought *to do as they wou'd be done by.*

It was farther obſerv'd, that this Rule comprehends all the Duty we owe to our Neighbour, and therefore our Saviour calls it in the Text, *the Law and the Prophets.* Whatever the Law and the Prophets hath enjoin'd, with Reference to this Mat-

ter, is contain'd in this Compend, *doing to others as we would they ſhould do unto us:* The like Abridgment the *Apoſtle* gives us of the ſecond Table of the Law, *Rom.* xiii. 8, 9. *He that loveth hath fulfilled the Law.* It was alſo obſerv'd, that this Rule ſuppoſes every Man loves himſelf, and has a tender Regard to his own Intereſt; if Self-love was not natural, deep rooted, and inſeparable from us, it had not been made the Meaſure of our acting towards others. It was again obſerv'd, that as we truly love ourſelves, and deſire our own Happineſs, ſo the Rule includes the other great Rule of the Goſpel, *that we love our Neighbour as ourſelves*; the one is the Foundation of the other, and muſt firſt be learnt, or the other will never be practiſed. Why muſt I not injure my Neighbour, any more than I would not be injur'd myſelf? The Reaſon is, becauſe I am to love him as myſelf, and as ſincerely deſire his Welfare as my own. Lord, teach me this Love, and there will be an End of all Inſults, Wrongs, hoſtile Invaſions and Oppreſſions.

Next, the Rule was explained; in order to which it was ſuggeſted, that it is not to be underſtood that our Deſire and Will, however byaſs'd and depraved, is to be Meaſure of our acting towards others. A Perſon may will another ſhould do to him what is hurtful and ſinful, but that will not warrant his doing the like to another: *Saul* would have his Armour-Bearer kill him; but it doth not follow that therefore he might kill his Armour-Bearer. But the Meaning in ſhort is, that whatever we deſire, according to the Laws of right Reaſon, of Equity and Charity, another ſhould do unto us, that we ſhould do unto them. And this being laid down as the Limitation of the Rule, it was propos'd as the chief Intention and great Advantage of the Rule, *that in all our Intercourſe with our Neighbour we ſhould change Perſons with him, put*

ourſelves in his Stead, and then act towards him, as we would deſire he ſhould act towards us, was he in our Place and we in his. We ſhould, ſaith *Lactantius, in aliis hominibus nos ipſos cogitare, in nobis alios,* conſider ourſelves in thoſe we have to do with, and in ourſelves conſider others. In ſhort, the great Deſign of the Rule is to exclude Selfiſhneſs in our Tranſactions with others, and Treatment of them; and 'tis admirably contriv'd for that Purpoſe, as it requires a Commutation, or Change of Perſons with them. Every Man is tender of his own Intereſt, would not be deprived of what is due to him, neglected, injured, or any way wrong'd; according to this Rule he is obliged to treat others with the like Tenderneſs and Equity he himſelf would be treated; And how happy a World would it be, what a glorious Change would it introduce among us, was this Precept made the Meaſure of our acting! Oh! that all who heard theſe Things, and had this admirable Rule ſet before them, might tranſcribe and live in it. Lord, write it upon my Heart; may I never forget it!

The Miniſter proceeded to conſider the Extent of the Rule. And here a great many Caſes were mention'd, wherein we ſhould apply it, behaving towards others, as we would deſire they ſhould behave towards us, were they in our, and we in their Circumſtances; particularly Perſons, in their reſpective Relations, ſhould conduct themſelves according to this Rule; as Husbands and Wives, Parents and Children, Maſters and Servants, Miniſters and People, Magiſtrates and Subjects. Did Perſons retire into their own Breaſts, and impartially examine what 'tis they expect from their reſpective Relatives, and perform the ſame to them, it would remove many Complaints, redreſs many Grievances, and model their Behaviour very much to their mutual Comfort and Advantage. We ſhould act by this Rule in judging others: Some have thought

thought the Rule has ſpecial Reference to that Matter, connecting this with the firſt Verſe of the Chapter. We ſhould not judge raſhly and ſeverely, ſpying and magnifying the Mote in our Brother's Eye; but let Equity hold the Balance, when we are weighing the Actions of our Neighbours; and in the mean Time Charity ſhould caſt in as many Grains of Allowance as the Nature of the Thing, and as the Standard and Touchſtone of the Goſpel will admit of. To make Faults where there are none, or aggravate ſuch as are real, is the Property of a very ill Nature, ſhews Envy, Malice, *&c.* and is directly contrary to the great Law of Charity, 1 *Cor.* xiii. 4, 7. and every one feels in himſelf how contrary 'tis to the Rule in the Text: We ſhould take it ill to have our Words and Actions appear with a malicious Gloſs, and be commented upon with an uncharitable Rigour; and conſequently we ſhould not mete this Meaſure to others.

The Rule muſt accompany us through all our Converſation concerning others; direct us how to treat their Character and Actions *(viz.)* as we would be treated ourſelves: Some take a Pleaſure in throwing Dirt; if they can pick up any thing to the Diſadvantage of another, away they run with it through the Town, and are as *Solomon* ſpeaks, a Maul, a Sword, and ſharp Arrow, *Prov.* xxvii. 18. they wound the good Name of their Neighbour, batter down his Reputation, and ſhoot at him privily. Sometimes they do this more openly, by downright Calumny; ſometimes by invidious Inſinuations. How little Regard they have to the Rule in the Text, every one may obſerve. Would Perſons put themſelves in the Stead of their Neighbour, it would ſtop their Mouth, or give another Turn to their Diſcourſe: And as this Rule ſhould be obſerv'd in our Converſe about others, ſo in our Converſe *with* them, and reſtrain us from an haugh-

ty, proud, inſulting Carriage: We don't like this ourſelves; would not have our Infirmities expoſed, and Weakneſſes triumphed over; would not be deſpiſed and made little; well, the ſame Tenderneſs we have for ourſelves, we ſhould expreſs towards others. The Rule alſo extends to the forgiving Injuries, and would be of excellent Uſe here, if duly applied: How often do we need the Charity of our Brethren? This or that Perſon has offended us, we are implacable, no After-Carriage can reſtore them to our Friendſhip; there needs no more to ſhame us out of this unchriſtian Rigour of Temper, than to reflect on our Rule. Should God deal ſo with us, we were loſt for ever; and ſhould Man deal ſo with us, the Conſequence would be our Excluſion from Society, or at leaſt from the Comforts of it. The ſame Rule is to be obſerved in all the Caſes of Neceſſity, Miſery and Diſtreſs, in which at any time we may find our Brethren: We ſhould change Perſons with them, put ourſelves in their Stead, and thence learn how to behave towards them: We ſhould ſometimes in our Thoughts ſtep down into the Circumſtances of the moſt indigent, that we may the better learn the Force of their Oratory, *hear the Cry of the Poor.* Though indeed all ſuch Cries ought to be prevented; but while 'tis not ſo, the Rule in the Text will teach us ſome Regard to them. Were we melancholy and diſtreſſed in Spirit, Widows, Orphans, ſick and in Priſon, how would we expect others ſhould treat us, without Bowels and Compaſſion, a kind Look, Word or Action? certainly not well. What we would juſtly deſire for ourſelves in ſuch Circumſtances, we are to do towards others who are in them.

It was obſerved that the Rule extends to that great Right of human Nature, every Man's judg-

ing for himſelf in Matters of Religion. Every one here is ready to complain of Impoſitions, and thinks himſelf exceedingly injured by them; and yet how common is it for him that judgeth, and condemneth another, to do the ſame Thing. If it be ſaid Men ought to judge right, I anſwer, every one thinks he doth ſo, and 'tis impoſſible he ſhould think otherwiſe: So that whoever impoſes his Sentiments upon another, without convincing him of the Truth of them, violates the moſt fundamental Right of Conſcience, is unjuſt in the higheſt Degree, and tramples the Maxim in the Text under Foot: The Rule ſhould take Place in all Matters of Truſt committed to us; as in Secrets, the Execution of Wills, and the like. No Man would herein be betray'd; a Breach of Truſt in theſe Things is often of the worſt Conſequence, and what we would abhor in others; and therefore ſhould never be guilty of ourſelves. Laſtly, the Rule was recommended as of eminent Uſe in Traffick, in buying and ſelling. Here the Laws of commutative Juſtice are to be obſerv'd, therefore ſhould be *Ratio dati & accepti*; Equality muſt be kept between Buyer and Seller; the Seller is to receive a moderate Gain, and the Buyer a juſt Pennyworth. Something was offer'd to ſtate this Equality, and the Rule in the Text apply'd to the Caſe, *viz.* that the Buyer and Seller ſhould change Perſons, each put himſelf in the other's Place, and do as he would reaſonably deſire to be done by: Such a Commutation would go far to cure the Selfiſhneſs that is the Bane of Commerce, and really be the beſt Caſuiſt in theſe Matters. I would not be injured by an ill Commodity, or any exorbitant Price; was I a Buyer, the ſame Equity (that my Conſcience neceſſarily approves) ſhould govern me when I am a Seller. *Caveat Emptor*, is a

Rule I can't reconcile to the Bible; the Meaning is, let the Buyer look about him, 'tis his own Fault if he be cheated; whereas it may be more my Fault than his: I ſhould not ſuffer him to cheat himſelf, and reſolve he ſhall not be cheated by me. This the Laws of Juſtice and Equity require, and if I act otherwiſe, Conſcience muſt tell me I forget the Rule of our Saviour, and do as I would not be done by.

O my Soul! apply and endeavour to improve what thou haſt read; ſtudy this Rule, and let it govern thee in all thy Correſpondence with thy Neighbour; bewail paſt Neglects, and labour for a more exact Compliance with it for the future: Conſider the Excellency and Importance of the Rule. 'Tis ſaid of the Emperor *Severus*, that he was ſo much pleaſed with this Sentence of the Goſpel, that he cauſed it to be inſcribed over the Gates of the Palace; and ſo highly did he honour the Author, that he built a Temple to him, added him to the Number of his Gods: And when he ſaw any of his Soldiers committing Spoils in the Fields of others, he would reprove them, quoting this divine Paſſage againſt them; *Wouldſt thou have this done in thy Field, which thou doſt in the Field of others?* But whether the Emperor ſaid ſuch Things, and practiſed accordingly, or not, the Equity of the Rule is undeniable, and indeed ſelf-evident; Nature teaches it, Scripture teaches it, the Son of God himſelf teaches it; not only as having Equity in it, but as being the Teſt of Equity, and comprizing in itſelf the Subſtance of it all Equity. O my Soul! conſider the Sacredneſs of this Rule, thou canſt not violate it without the Reproach of thy own Conſcience, as a Man, and contradicting thy Profeſſion as a Chriſtian. No Pretences to Faith, no Zeal in the Forms of Worſhip will avail any

one, that is prevailingly ſelfiſh, unjuſt and oppreſſive towards others. If I neglect the great eſſential Laws of natural and revealed Religion, I am but an Hypocrite, whatever Diſguiſe of Sanctity I may appear in. As he that loves fulfilleth the Law; ſo he that loveth not, that neglects this Maxim of Juſtice and Love, violates the Law of it; he tramples under Foot the whole Law and Prophets at once. And I would farther conſider, that the groſs notorious Violation of this Rule is often remarkably puniſh'd in this World. *Judge not that ye be not judged; for with what Meaſure you mete, it ſhall be meaſured to you again*, Matt. vii. 1, 2. The ſevere Cenſurer, the Backbiter and Slanderer, that delights in Scandal, and can ſcarce let any one paſs without a Laſh of his Tongue, and without throwing out ſome of his Poiſon of Aſps, is generally paid in his own Coin; others uſe the ſame Freedom with his Reputation, as he has done with theirs: And the ſame may be obſerv'd in other Inſtances, wherein Perſons caſt this ſacred Rule of Commerce behind their Back. *Let no Man*, ſaith the *Apoſtle, go beyond, or defraud his Brother in any* Thing, for *God is the Avenger of all ſuch*, 1 Theſſ. iv. 6. Sometimes the Vengeance is taken in this World; Providence retaliates the Crime, puniſhes it in Kind, letting looſe the Paſſions of others upon us in the ſame Way ours work'd towards them. *When thou ſhalt ceaſe to ſpoil, thou ſhalt be ſpoiled; and when thou haſt made an End to deal treacherouſly, they ſhall deal treacherouſly with thee*, Iſa. xxxiii. 1. *Adonibezek* had his Cruelty return'd into his own Boſom, *Judges* i. 6, 7. Many ſuch Inſtances there are in preſent Providence; thouſands that we don't underſtand, and can't expound. However, ſhould the Puniſhment be deferr'd, it will come; if Men be not the Inſtruments of God's Wrath now, he'll

take the Work into his own Hand hereafter. *God is the Revenger of all ſuch*, and will execute Vengeance ſooner or later.

O my God! teach me thy Statutes; this great Rule particularly of my Lord and Maſter. I am aſham'd to think how much I have neglected it; how apt I have been to weigh myſelf and Neighbour in different Ballances; that I have had no more Regard to this excellent Precept, that comes recommended to me by the higheſt Authority, and ſtands approved by my own Conſcience. Lord, forgive my Selfiſhneſs, my Injuſtice in Words and Actions, and in all my Carriage * towards my Neighbour.

I would reſolve for the future, by thy Grace, to exerciſe more Love and Benevolence towards Mankind, to mortify myſelf, to put off that undue

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* I don't expect, that the moſt ſerious and devout ſhould review the Sermons they hear, as largely and according to this Specimen; much leſs that they ſhould thus review *every* Sermon. What I propoſe, is, that ſometimes the Sermons heard ſhould be review'd, with ſuch Remarks as the Subject of the Diſcourſe may require. Such as take Notes may do it more fully and diſtinctly; others, if they deſign it, and accordingly attend to what they hear, may be able from their Memory to furniſh proper Matter for ſuch an Exerciſe. If they retain only the general Method, the main Scope of the Diſcourſe, and ſome particular Heads with ſuch Paſſages as they find themſelves moſt nearly concerned in, it may be ſufficient for the Purpoſe. And I am miſtaken, if a few Sermons thus uſed, thus recollected, applied and preach'd over in private, don't prove of more Advantage than many hundreds heard in the careleſs manner, that is uſual, (*i. e.*) are never thought of afterwards, but the Hearer and Preacher have done together. One half Hour or Hour once or twice a Week, (and as often as any thing occurs from the Pulpit that calls for it) thus employ'd, would turn to good Account, and glorioufly quit the Coſt; not only help Perſons to hear with more Attention, but profit more by what they hear.

Sef-

Self-love, that has been the Occaſion of ſo much Injury to others, and Diſhonour to my Profeſſion. O! that I may love my Neighbour as myſelf.

I would reſolve to ſet this Rule conſtantly before me in my Intercourſe with Mankind; conſider myſelf in them, and offer them nothing I ſhould not like myſelf; or, according to the Laws of impartial Reaſon and Equity, I could object againſt: I would bind it about my Neck, write it on the Poſts of my Houſe, my Shop, or rather beg that God would write it on the Table of my Heart.

In any doubtful Actions, wherein I am to play the Caſuiſt, I would have Recourſe to this Rule for my Help in the Deciſion. If I am queſtioning whether this or that be juſt and charitable to my Neighbour, I deſire preſently to ſubſtitute myſelf in his ſtead, and then make a Judgment. Lord, pour out upon me more of the Spirit of Grace and Love: May I add to my Faith all other Graces, and among the reſt *brotherly Kindneſs and Charity*; the Grace of Heaven, *which never faileth.* And as I am preparing for that State, may I have in greater Abundance the Temper that ſuits it. In the mean Time, may I walk in Uprightneſs and Love, and exerciſe myſelf daily unto this, to have a Conſcience void of Offence towards God and towards Man.

THURSDAY Night, Six a-Clock.

THIS Day I attended the Lecture in the uſual Courſe, and heard a Sermon from the Text, 1 *Pet.* ii. 1. *Laying aſide all Envies*——In the Diſcourſe ſeveral Things were offer'd, that I thought myſelf not a little concern'd in, and therefore deſire *Specimen Twelfth.*

ſire to take this Opportunity to review what I can remember, and preach it over again to myſelf. Lord grant me the Spirit of Light, and Life from above.

(1) It was propos'd to explain the Sin, ſhew wherein it conſiſts; and it was repreſented as a ſecret Grudge and Diſpleaſure at the Good of another: Where the Object was conſider'd, *viz.* The Good of another, any Advantages another has, ſuppos'd or real, and that either above us, or in common with us; and envy ſometimes, tho' he have it in a lower Degree than what we have, or imagine we have. Any ſuppos'd Excellency is the Object of Envy; as Wealth and outward Proſperity, *Prov.* iii. 31. *Iſai.* i. 11, 13. *Pſ.* lxxiii. 1. Eſteem, Honour, Favour, *Acts* vii. 9. *Pſ.* cvi. 16. *Mat.* xxvii. 18. Parts, Learning, good Works, *Eccleſ.* iv. 4. nay even Grace and Favour with God affords Matter for this Corruption to work upon, ſo vile is it, *Gen.* iv. 5. As to the Act, it lies in a ſecret Diſpleaſure, an inward Grudge, *Gen.* iv. 5. The Scripture calls it *an evil Eye*, Mat. xx. 15.

(2) Some Obſervations were made concerning this Sin; as that 'tis what we are all prone to: 'Tis a Diſtemper of our Nature, *James* iv. 5. *Vidi parvulum zelantem*, &c. ſaith St. *Auſtin*, I have ſeen a little Child look pale with Envy. 'Tis generally found, and more ſtrongly worketh betwixt Perſons that have ſomething of Equality. "Envy lies "moſt between Beings of the ſame Nature. We "don't envy Brutes, tho' they exceed us in many "Reſpects, not inconſiderable. No Man is diſpleas'd "with a Bird, becauſe ſhe can flie, and he can't: "We are not offended with the Strength of an Elephant or Swiftneſs of an Horſe; the Reaſon is, theſe "are all foreign Commodities, not look'd on as the "Growth of our Soil, which makes them neither

"ex-

" expected nor desir'd, and that's enough to lay " our Envy asleep. Nor do we envy the higher " Condition of the Angels; the Reason is partly, " that the Angels are seldom seen: Their Grandeur " lies hid; but chiefly, the Model of our Nature " was drawn less than that of the Angels; and " therefore, tho' we may admire them, we don't " envy them: We don't think ourselves diminish'd " and reflected on, when their superior Excellency " is acknowledg'd." Envy is between Creatures of the same common Nature; between Men and Men, and not between Men and Brutes, or between Men and Angels; nor indeed doth it obtain so ordinarily and in so great Degree, where there is the utmost Inequality and Distance among Creatures of the same Nature. It works most where there is something of Equality; as between Persons of the same Age, Birth and Education; between Persons of the same Calling and Employment Scholars envy Scholars, Soldiers envy Soldiers, *&c.* and in all Cases where there is ill Will, Enmity and Animosity, the Envy is more easily excited.

It was observ'd that it has its Rise from Pride; this is the true Spring and Cause of it. Men would shine alone, or at least can't bear that others should outshine or eclipse them. They are their own Idols, and would have all the Incense offer'd unto them. It was observ'd that this Vice variously discovers itself: 'Tis discover'd to a Man's self secretly, by the Uneasiness it gives him: 'Tis Rottenness to the Bones, the Saw of the Mind, as the Orator calls it; it doth, as it were, tear the Heart, prey upon the Spirits, and destroy the Comfort of every Enjoyment, *Gen.* iv. 5. 7. It discovers itself in a sort of Triumph at the Falls, Dishonours, Diminutions, and any sort of Miseries of another; in concealing from others what tends to their Advantage:

tage: Envy hides its Talents, that others may not partake of the Honour and Comfort of them. It diſcovers it ſelf in Defamation, nibbling at the Reputation of thoſe we envy, and endeavouring to blaſt it; we are grieved at their good and their ſeveral Advantages, wiſh them lower, and therefore attempt to bring them lower.

(3) The Evil of it was next diſplay'd. 'Tis reckon'd among *the Works of the Fleſh, Adultery, Fornication, Uncleanneſs, Idolatry*, &c. *Gal.* v. 21. 'Tis repreſented as the Character of the Unregenerate, *Tit.* iii. 3. *Rom.* xiii. 13. 'Tis the greateſt Enemy to Peace, the Peace of a Man's own Mind: 'Tis a conſtant Torture within, as every one experiences, that is under the Power of it; and 'tis no leſs an Enemy to the Peace of Society, hence it is ſo commonly join'd with Strife and the like in the ſacred Scripture, as *Rom.* i. 29. xxiii. 13. *Gal.* v. 20. 'Tis often impetuous and carries Perſons to the greateſt Exceſſes of Rage. Nothing would ſatisfy *Cain*'s Envy, but the Blood of his Brother; and for the ſame Principle it was that *Saul* attempted *David*'s Life. 'Tis an Affront to God, as it carries in it a Cenſure of his Providence in his Diſtributions: It diſputes his Sovereignty; will not ſuffer him to do what he will with his own, and arraigns his Wiſdom, as if he had plac'd his Favours wrong, and made an unwiſe Diſpoſal of them. *It grieves the Spirit of God*, Gal. v. 25, 26. 'Tis the moſt unreaſonable and abſurd of all Vices; it ſickens at the Sight of Health, and languiſhes over Proſperity. The Philoſopher, to expreſs his Deteſtation of it, wiſhes the envious Man more Eyes and Ears than others, that he might be tormented by ſeeing and hearing of other Mens Happineſs. In a Word, 'tis the Sin of the Devil, his very Image and Nature. He could not behold the Felicity of our

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firſt Parents in Paradiſe without attempting to ruin it; and from the ſame ſpiteful miſchievous Nature he acts in all the Plots he has been carrying on againſt Mankind ever ſince.

And O my Soul! what Reaſon have I to be humbled and even abhor myſelf, that I am polluted, ſo far polluted with this——what ſhall I call it? Wickedneſs, Vileneſs, Diaboliſm. Juſtly might God ſend me to Hell, the Place of Envy and Malice. O! for Mercy, Lord, forgive my exceeding Sinfulneſs. *Purge me with Hyſſop, and I ſhall be clean, waſh me, and I ſhall be whiter than Snow*; cleanſe me from all my Filthineſs, both of Fleſh and of Spirit.

Three Things I would reſolve upon, and ſeriouſly endeavour. To get Pride mortify'd: That is the Root of Bitterneſs, from whence this, and indeed moſt other of my evils ſpring. To get my Charity more increas'd: I would take pleaſure in the Welfare of my Neighbour; be always ready to give him his juſt Praiſe; ſtudy to promote his Happineſs and Comforts as my own; never think myſelf leſſen'd by his Advantages and Enjoyments, but take occaſion from the Bounty of Heaven to him, to magnify the Giver, and rejoice with the Receiver. I would endeavour to pray down more of the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Love, to mortify this and all other my Corruptions. Lord look upon me in Mercy. How like Hell has Sin made poor apoſtate Man! Nothing but thy Grace can raiſe us to Heaven; can give us the Temper of Heaven, and fit us for the Element of Goodneſs and Love. Lord grant me thy Spirit, to correct and heal my Nature; make me more like thyſelf. *God is Love, and he that dwelleth in Love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.*

LORDS-DAY *Night Five a-Clock.*

Specimen Thirteenth.

THE Text to Day was *Ja.* iv. 11. *Speak not Evil one of another Brethren.* Several Things in the Sermon came close to my Conscience, and gave me Occasion to say with *Pharaoh*'s Butler, *I remember my Fault this Day.* Great Reason I have to reflect upon, and censure my Infirmities. Blessed be God for his good Word, and for a Gospel-Ministry: I find the Truth of the Character of Holy Scripture, *that 'tis profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, and for Instruction in Righteousness;* and I find it more so, as open'd and apply'd by Ministers. Lord, give them the Tongue of the Learned, help them rightly to divide the Word of Truth. I am thankful for the Advantage I found in attending upon this Institution this Day; and as I saw my self in the Glass of the Word, I would again hold the Glass before the Eye of my Soul, and therein take a farther View of myself. Lord, search me and try me; make thy Word quick and powerful, effectually profitable for my *Correction.*

The Text was criticis'd upon, and in part explain'd by the other Text, *Tit.* iii. 2. *Put them in mind to speak Evil of no Man*; where it was noted, the Word in the *Greek* signifies *to blaspheme, i. e.* to wound or hurt the Reputation or Fame; so that the Sense is, that we are not to speak to the Disadvantage or Prejudice of another; or as the Word in the present Text imports, *speak against one another.* I shall recollect some things that were said according to the Method of the Discourse. (1) It was suggested, that 'tis not all speaking evil of another that is here condemn'd. (2) It was inquir'd what is that speaking evil forbid, and when Persons

ſons are guilty of it. (3) The Cauſes of it were alſo inquir'd into. (4) Some Arguments were offer'd againſt it.

(1) It was ſuggeſted, that 'tis not all ſpeaking evil of another that is here condemn'd. 'Tis ſometimes ſo far from being a Sin to do this, that 'tis a great Duty: Magiſtrates may lay open the Crimes of ſuch as are arraign'd before them. Private Perſons, as Witneſſes, may declare the Evil they know of others; and not to do it in ſome Caſes, would involve them in Guilt, *Levit.* v. 1. And the like may be ſaid in Caſes of more private Diſcipline; that of particular Churches and Families. The Houſhold of *Cloe* inform'd the Apoſtle of the Contentions and Schiſms of the *Corinthians*, 1 *Cor.* i. 11. *Joſeph* inform'd his Father of the Miſcarriages of his Brethren, *Gen.* xxxvii. 2. The People brought to *Eli* an Account of the Wickedneſs of his Sons, 1 *Sam.* ii. 23. Nor doth it ſeem there was any Fault in all this, any ſinful evil ſpeaking. The Execution of publick Juſtice, the Safety of the Community, the Order and Diſcipline of Families and Churches, allow and require this Liberty, that ſome Perſons ſpeak Evil of others, *i. e.* lay their Faults before ſuch as are concern'd to animadvert upon them. Farther, it is not lawful to take Notice and ſpeak of publick and notorious Scandals. When Perſons declare their Sin as *Sodom*, 'tis no Offence againſt this Rule to mention it, if it be only to ſhew an Abhorrence of it. Nor is it any Fault in Hiſtorians, impartially to relate the groſſer Miſcarriages of thoſe they are concern'd with, eſpecially of Perſons in publick Stations. Many valuable Ends may be ſerv'd hereby; a Mark of Infamy ſet upon Crimes that deſerve it; Caution adminiſtred to others, *&c.* 'Tis obſervable that inſpired Hiſtorians leave on Record the Failings of ſome of the greateſt and beſt

of

of Men; as of *Noah*, *Lot*, *Moſes*, *Aaron*, *David*, *Solomon*, *Peter*, and others. It may ſometimes be lawful to ſpeak of the Evil we know of others, for the Caution of our Friends; as to prevent prejudicial Alliances, dangerous Truſts or Intimacies; tho' here, to be ſure, we are not to aggravate Faults, make every Mote a Beam, ruin any one's Character *at once and for ever*, becauſe of ſome Blemiſh we imagin'd or found in it; much leſs are we to invent Faults, or ſuppoſe them, without ſufficient Evidence. The ſame Liberty is allowable when the ſpeaking evil of another is neceſſary to our own Vindication, or the Vindication of any innocent Perſon; and there are many Caſes in which it may be neceſſary: The Guilty muſt be laid open, or the Innocent will ſuffer. It was added in the laſt Place, it may not be altogether unwarrantable, nor fall under the Reproof of this Text, to ſpeak of the Faults of others, tho' none of the foremention'd Ends can be ſerv'd by it. Intimate Friends may mention the Failings of their Neighbours and Brethren, to bewail them and lament them, eſpecially if it be done with a charitable Deſign, and Attempt of correcting them. If a Perſon ſuffer by the Fault of another, by Unkindneſs, Injuſtice and ill Carriage, it may be allowable to communicate ſuch Grievances to a Friend, for their Advice and Counſel; and even their Compaſſion and Sympathy may afford ſome little Relief, if they can do nothing elſe for us: And in theſe Caſes it may not be lawful to ſpeak evil of another; the Text, it was ſuppos'd, doth not reſpect ſuch ſpeaking of evil.

And this being premis'd, it was inquir'd, (2) what the evil ſpeaking, here condemned, is, and when Perſons may be ſaid to be guilty of it. (1) They are guilty in the groſſeſt manner, when they

they forge Evil of others, and publiſh it to their Hurt. This is downright malicious Calumny, and yet has been, and is too common, *Matt.* v. 11. *Ahab* found Sons of *Belial* to witneſs againſt *Naboth*, that he *blaſphem'd God and the King*, 1 Kings xxi. 13. Many a one has had Reaſon to complain with the Pſalmiſt, *Falſe Witneſſes did riſe up; they laid to my Charge Things that I knew not.* Pſ. xxxv. 11. (2) Perſons are guilty of this Sin when they ſpeak evil of another, without Evidence that 'tis true; tho' we don't know it to be falſe, yet if we don't know it to be true, 'tis a great Fault. And this is aggravated, when we are forward to believe and take up the Reproach, and to ſpread it; when we are pleas'd with the Ill we are propagating, eſpecially if it be very much to the Prejudice of our Neighbour; and in the mean time whilſt we ſpread the ill Story, we ourſelves ſuſpect the Truth of it. Haſt thou, O my Soul, been herein guilty? If ſo, Tears are but a low Expreſſion of the Reſentment that is due. (3) We may be chargeable with the Sin of evil ſpeaking, even when the Evil we ſpeak of another we know to be true; as when we give it as bad a Turn as poſſible, leave out every Circumſtance that might in part excuſe or extenuate the Evil; when it can ſerve no good End, and we have no Call to ſpeak the ill things of another we are privy to; and what Reaſon have I here to cry *Guilty, Guilty!* to fall on my Face and abhor myſelf? Tho' I dare not invent a Scandal, forge ill, and charge on my Neighbour, yet how often have I unneceſſarily publiſh'd the Ill I know of him? And has not Ill-will to him, Malice, Envy and the like wicked Principle, prompted me to this uncharitable Office! Lord have Mercy upon me; *waſh me thoroughly from mine Iniquity, and cleanſe me from my Sin.* It was obſerv'd (4) that this Iniquity

quity is ſometimes committed by Innuendo's and Inſinuations. Have you heard, ſaith the Backbiter, any thing of ſuch a Perſon? I am not willing to believe it; don't care for ſpeaking: Now I grant there may be little Fault in all this: They may be Words of Truth, Soberneſs and Charity, if the Perſon that ſpeaks them has juſt Occaſion to do it; but often all theſe ſmooth Things are ſaid on purpoſe to diſguiſe Malice, and wound the deeper. They firſt ſaid they knew ſomething of ſuch a one very ill, and that they are unwilling to believe it, and yet would have others believe it, and leave them to ſuſpect it to be much worſe than it is. (5) 'Tis very common for Detractors and Calumniators, when they can't find fault with Perſons Actions to cenſure their Principles: If this or that Thing be allow'd to be well done, they preſently find ſomething to ſully it; if there had not, ſay they, been ſo much Pride, *&c.* in it——Like the Devil, that could not object againſt *Job*'s good Character, but then he inſinuates, he was ſelfiſh, and an Hypocrite in all, *Job* i. 9. In ſhort, Perſons of this Temper *will* have others naught, and therefore if they can't find Matter *without*, for the Spirit of Cenſure and Detraction to faſten upon, they enter *within*, judge in the dark, and ſpeak evil of Things they know not, nor can know. Lord, preſerve me from this malicious Preſumption; ſave me from every Degree of it, pardon my paſt Guilt.——

(3) The Cauſes and ſecret Springs of this Vice were laid open. In ſome it proceeds very much from a churliſh dogged Temper: They love to throw Dirt, and beſpatter; are conſtantly ſnarling at almoſt ever body that comes in their Way, even when there is no ſpecial Enmity on their part, and no particular Provocation given them by any. It often

often proceeds from Reſentment of Injuries, real or ſuppoſed. Hence that Admonition 1 *Pet.* iii. 8, 9. *Love as Brethren, be pitiful, be courteous, not rendring Evil for Evil, nor Railing for Railing, but contrary-wiſe Bleſſing.* To the ſame purpoſe, *Mat.* v. 44. if others rail, ſpeak evil of us, or act ill towards us, we are apt this way to avenge ourſelves. O! may I be on my Guard here; guard againſt ill Impreſſions from the Carriage of others, to the Diminution and Hurt of my Charity; if I ſuffer Wrath and Enmity in the Heart, Railing, Backbiting and Evil-ſpeaking will follow, *Col.* iii. 8. It frequently has riſe from Pride and Envy. The proud Man would ſhine alone, at laſt appear with ſome diſtinguiſh'd Luſtre. He's ready to think all the good Things ſaid of another, and all the Honours paid him, is ſo much loſt to himſelf; and hence as he envies the Reputation of his Brother, he ſets himſelf by a malevolent Tongue, to leſſen and ruin it. He ſeeks to riſe by the Depreſſion, and ſhine by the Eclipſe of others. Helliſh Quality this! and yet, how prevailing? How common a Source of Detraction and evil ſpeaking? It was remark'd that Bigottry, a blind Zeal in matters of Religion is a very common Cauſe of this Practice: Such is the Fury and real Fanaticiſm frequently, of Men of this Spirit, who are under the Influence of a warm Party-zeal; that none can differ from them, but they preſently ſet them up as Enemies, and think it allowable to proſecute them as ſuch: They are Heterodox, Hereticks, and all that's naught; and having made them thus vile in their own Imagination, they ſcruple not to repreſent them and treat them accordingly; hence Bitterneſs, Wrath, Clamour and evil ſpeaking; hence a Courſe and Habit of Calumny, and that allow'd, and it may be glo-

ried in; the pretended Zeal is ſuppos'd to hallow all theſe vile Paſſions.

O my Soul! endeavour a greater Dread of this Sin (evil ſpeaking) a more noted Abhorrence of it: Improve what has been ſaid to this purpoſe this Day. It was obſerv'd that 'tis a very common Failing of good Men; ſuch as make Conſcience of other groſs Sins, are more eaſily ſurpriz'd into this. It was not altogether without Reaſon, that a Father (*St. Jerom*) calls it one of the laſt Snares of the Devil. O! may I be convinc'd of the Evil of it. 'Tis an high Inſtance of Uncharitableneſs, and exceeding pernicious and hurtful. 'Tis hurtful to thoſe of whom we ſpeak evil, it deſtroys (ſo far) their Reputation; 'tis hurtful to thoſe to whom we ſpeak, it deſtroys their Charity; 'tis hurtful to our ſelves,* it deſtroys our Peace, *grieves the Spirit of God*, &c. *Eph.* iv. 30, 31, 32. 'Tis an high Offence againſt God, and Contempt of his Authority; hence that of the Apoſtle, *Jam.* iv. 11. *He that ſpeaketh evil of another, ſpeaketh evil of the Law*; he undervalues it, tramples upon it, as worthy of no Regard, not fit to preſcribe to him; he deſpiſeth the Commandment of the Lord to *do evil in his Sight*. O! my Soul, don't extenuate this Crime, and becauſe 'tis a common Sin, think 'tis no Sin, or a little one. It has a great deal of Malignity in it; ſo the Scripture repreſents it, placing it among the worſt, the moſt ſcandalous Iniquities, and make it the Character of the worſt Men, *Rom.* i. 29, 30. 2 *Cor.* xii. 20. *Eph.* iv. 31. 1 *Cor.* v. 11. O! may I conſider this, and now ſay (I have great Reaſon to ſay it, Lord, help me by thy Grace) *that I will take heed to my Way, that I offend not with my Tongue.* I would take up a Reſolution of more Caution for the future.

How

* Calumniator is ſaid by the *Hebrew* Doctors to ſpeak with a threefold Tongue, becauſe he hurteth three therewith; himſelf by Sin, his neighbour whom he backbiteth and the Receiver of his Tale, whom he corrupteth

How happy ſhould I think myſelf, could I ſay with an eminent Miniſter: I bleſs God, ſaith he, I have not given any Man's Reputation a ſecret Wound behind his Back for many Years. Lord, teach me thy Statutes, guide me in thy Truth and teach me.

Two or three Things I would reſolve upon, touching my future Conduct: Not unneceſſarily and ſo much as is common, make others the Subject of my Converſation; nor need this make a Vacuity in Diſcourſe, I may find enough to talk of, without talking conſtantly of others. As God, the Works of God, daily Providences, the Bible, myſelf, my Failings, Wants, Mercies; the Neceſſities and Miſeries of others, the News, *&c.* and indeed almoſt any thing, rather than my Neighbour, when I bring him upon the Stage only to kick him or laſh him. I would reſolve, when I ſpeak of others, to ſpeak all the good I can of them; not that we are to call Evil good, palliate, excuſe, much leſs plead for, and vindicate downright Sin and Wickedneſs: When I am call'd to ſpeak of very ill Men, and very ill Things, it may be fit to ſpeak juſtly of them, and ſhew my Diſlike; but I would ordinarily keep off this Subject, and when I ſpeak of others, ſpeak as much good of them as I can, eſpecially when I am ſpeaking of good Men, chuſing to enlarge on their Excellencies, and touch their Faults more ſparingly. I would reſolve to think as well of my Neighbour as I can; would not hearken to Whiſperers, Backbiters, nor give way to evil Surmiſes, but maintain all the Eſteem I can for others, and cheriſh the Charity that believeth all things, and hopeth all things. Above all, I would ſee that I never take Pleaſure in thinking or ſpeaking Evil of others. If it once be grievous to me to think of and hear

of the ill Things of others, it will be grievous to me to ſpeak of them, and there will need little elſe to reſtrain me from ſpeaking of them unſeaſonably, unneceſſarily, and to their Hurt. Lord, Lord, ſhed abroad the Love of my Neighbour in my Heart: May I love him as myſelf; forgive my many and great Miſcarriages in this Inſtance, and waſh me thoroughly from mine Iniquity. Purge the Fountain, cleanſe me from all Filthineſs of the Spirit; grant me a pure and charitable Heart, and I ſhall have a pure Lip and charitable Tongue.

THURSDAY Night, 8 a-Clock.

Specimen Fourteen.

I This Day heard a Sermon about forgiving one another. The Text was *Mark* xi. 25. *And when ye ſtand praying, forgive, if ye have ought againſt any.* I don't pretend to remember all the Particulars of the Sermon. I have before heard and read many things on the like Subject, and to the like Purpoſe. But alas! how defective in this, as well as other Duties? I need, I am ſure, to have my Mind ſtir'd up by way of Remembrance. Lord, keep theſe Things upon the Imagination of the Thoughts of my Heart for ever. In the Explication of the Duty in the Text, *forgiving others*, when we have any Act againſt them, it was hinted, that it implies we don't ſeek Revenge, nor endeavour to retaliate the Injury, *Rom.* xii. 19. 1 *Theſſ.* v. 15. Nor are we to deſire that God ſhould take Vengeance, like *Brutus*, who when he could not have his Will on his Enemy, cried out paſſionately to *Jupiter* to fall upon him. O! may I ſtand clear in this Matter. If I forgive mine Enemy, I muſt wiſh him well; neither hurt him myſelf, nor deſire his Hurt. I am not bound to take him for

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a Friend, and make him my Confident; but I am to wiſh his good, rejoice in his good, and be ready to do him any good Office.

Among many other Things that were offer'd in the Progreſs of the Diſcourſe, a great deal of ſuitable Advice that was given, two or three Particulars I deſire to take ſpecial notice of; O may I never forget them! (1) That we ſhould endeavour to heap Coals of Fire upon the Head of our Enemies, ſubdue them with Kindneſs, overcoming evil with good. It was a noble Reply of a Philoſopher to an angry enraged Man: *Let me die,* ſaith he, *if I be not revenged on him:* Let me die, reply'd the Philoſopher, if I don't make him my Friend. (2) The Example of one was mention'd and recommended, as it well deſerv'd, that uſed to keep a Liſt of ſuch as had injur'd him, that he might wait an Opportunity of doing them good, Lord, grant me this Charity, I ſhall think myſelf happier and richer in it, than in all the Treaſure of both Hemiſpheres. (3) It was ſuggeſted we ſhould with the greateſt Care watch our own Spirits (and attend to the Duty of forgiving others) under ſpecial Provocations and Trials: As when our moſt friendly Deſigns and kindeſt Endeavours are requited with ill Nature, Reproach and all manner of ill Offices; and there being ſomething of this in my own Caſe at preſent, I would look upon myſelf as more than ordinarily concern'd to mind the Admonition. Lord, the Preparation of the Heart is from thee, impreſs and form it to a Correſpondence with my Duty. I would particularly reſolve to inſert the Name of the Perſon, I have ſo much Reaſon to complain of, for a moſt unjuſt and ungrateful Carriage, in the Liſt of Offenders, whom I have to forgive, and who are to be the Objects of my Charity and Kindneſs, as

Opportunity offers. I would reſolve not to mention the Provocation and the Aggravations of it *unneceſſarily*; and no farther than my own Vindication, and the Cauſe of Juſtice and Truth requires. I would reſolve daily to remember this Offender in my Prayers, to recommend him to the divine Bleſſing, Teaching, Mercy and Forgiveneſs; hereby I ſhall not only exerciſe but increaſe my Charity, and take a likely Means to prevent all Bitterneſs, Rancour and Malice of Mind. Lord, be thou my Inſtructer. Grant a Bleſſing to thy Word, and to thy Miniſtry, and make my Heart upright before thee, and ſound in thy Statutes. Amen, and Amen *.

New-year's Day, *6 a Clock in the Morning.*

Specimen Fifteen.

IT having pleas'd God, in whoſe Hand my Breath is, and whoſe are all my Ways, to bring me to the Beginning of another Year, I deſire to employ myſelf in ſuch Devotion, as is ſuitable to the preſent Circumſtances of Time, to review the State of Things with me the laſt Year, and my Conduct in it; to ſtate Accounts between God

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* I am perſuaded that a few Sermons heard in this Manner, with ſuch Reflection afterwards, and Self-Application, will turn to a better Account (as before intimated) than a thouſand heard in the way that I am afraid is common; when we are like a Man that beholds his natural Face in a Glaſs, and goeth away, and forgetteth what manner of Man he was; and therefore can't but earneſtly recommend this Method to the Reader. I ſhould have added more Examples upon other Subjects, but have already far exceeded the Bounds intended upon the Head of Meditation, and therefore muſt forbear.

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and my Soul, at the Beginning of this Year, and to lay down Meaſures for my Behaviour in it, and thro' it, if it pleaſe God to ſpare me this Year alſo. In the Review of the laſt Year, I find a great many Mercies to bleſs God for: Mercy and Goodneſs has follow'd me all the Year; fill'd up every Month, Week and Day of it. God has graciouſly preſerv'd an unprofitable, very low, mean and worthleſs Life; a Providence I ought to be the more affected with, ſince it has been a Year of ſo great Mortality; many have fallen at my Side, many at my right Hand, but the Arrow of Death has not come near me. Perſons of various Characters and Conditions, of every Age, young and old, many of my particular Acquaintance, have this laſt Year gone into Eternity; the pious, judicious, uſeful Mr.——the hopeful young Mr.——and yet I am left, a poor Cumberground! Lord, what ſhall I render? I would chiefly value Life as 'tis a Seed-time for Eternity. If I ſhall have another Year, may I employ it well, and for Eternity! And the ſame kind Providence has extended to mine alſo; he has preſerv'd my Family in Health in the midſt of Sickneſs and Death: A good Meaſure of Proſperity has attended me in my outward Affairs, and in the Management of my Calling. I eſcaped a very great Blow in my Concern with——which would very much have incumber'd and ſtraitned me, had not a kind Providence prevented, which I have Reaſon to think it did, by a ſpecial Interpoſition in my Behalf. Some ſpecial ſpiritual Bleſſings I have to recount this Year, ſome Notice I have taken of them in my Diary, and deſire now to revive the Memory of them. I have Reaſon to hope good Impreſſions have been made upon the Heart of my——, a Mercy I have often ſought with ſtrong Crying and Tears. I

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met with many favourable Providences in my Journey to —— I heard a Sermon by Mr.——from *Matt.* xxv. 33. which I hope I receiv'd much Advantage from. I remember I was not only affected when I heard it, but it ſent me to my Knees——. I have Reaſon to hope God made me of ſome Uſe to——. Lord, I rejoice in thy Favours towards me; make me more attentive, zealous and watchful; more ſollicitous to receive and do good. I have enjoy'd the Means of Grace, Sabbaths, Sermons, Sacraments, in an uninterrupted Courſe, not without Refreſhments and Conſolations (alas! that they have been ſo little and ſo ſeldom) which I value more than all the World. I have had ſome comfortable Hours upon my Knees, and hope God has granted me ſomewhat more of the Spirit of Grace and Supplication than heretofore I had experienced. I have had ſome remarkable Anſwers of Prayer this Year, particularly upon occaſion of——, as recorded in my Diary. I would humbly hope I have made ſome Advances in Religion; have gain'd ſome Victory over a Sin that eaſily beſets me, and that I have often bewail'd. And I deſire never to forget the Support, Conduct and Comfort I had under a very peculiar Trial and Exerciſe I met with this Year in the Affair of—. Lord, what ſhall I render? I have no Words big and ſtrong enough to expreſs the Senſe I ought to have, and hope I have of thy Bounty, Condeſcention and Grace. I find myſelf often, of late, when about ſuch Work, *praiſing God*, inclin'd to refer it to Eternity; not but I would be attempting ſomething, and do my beſt now; but *then*, and not before, ſhall I praiſe him, truly praiſe him. Lord, aſſiſt me in this Service; accept my poor Acknowledgments for the Series and Current of Mercies that has run through the laſt Year; accept the

the Sacrifice of a grateful Heart; accept my Heart as the Sacrifice.

And oh! how many the Sins of the laſt Year? more than can be number'd, more than the Sand on the Sea Shoar. It might have been expected after ſuch an Hiſtory of Mercies, nothing could have offer'd on my Part, nothing to be ſet againſt them but Love, Gratitude, Devotion, and Obedience. But alas!——what ſhall I ſay? 'tis otherwiſe; I have not render'd unto the Lord according to his Benefits. My Diary admoniſhes me of ſeveral Defects and Miſcarriages, and Conſcience admoniſhes me of more: But as I am conſcious to myſelf of exceeding Diſorders, and as the diſtinct Conſideration of this Matter is of no ſmall Conſequence to me, I purpoſe, as ſoon as I can, as my Cuſtom has been ſome Years paſt, to ſet a Day apart for Examination, Humiliation, Prayer, and Thankſgiving; I ſhall only at preſent reflect on a few Things: The firſt is the Miſpence of Time, precious, invaluable Time; four of the twelve Months I ſlept away, which, though I don't mention as my Sin, yet ought to be conſider'd in the Computation of my Time. I had only eight Months to live *after a Sort:* And how much of this was ſquander'd away? one half ſhall I reckon? it may be more, in an undue, exceſſive Purſuit of the World; in unneceſſary, idle Viſits, Company, Diverſions, Amuſements, *&c.* O my Soul! bewail thy Inadvertency and Folly; weep over loſt Time. Is this Living for Eternity? How have I trifled in the Duties of ſolemn Worſhip; thoſe of the Cloſet, Family and Aſſembly; in my Converſe with God and with Man? How have I neglected my Watch? How unguarded my Thoughts, my Affections, my Tongue? Oh! vile above Meaſure: Who ever truſt in themſelves that they are Righteous,

eous, ſurely I cannot. Lord, be merciful to me a Sinner. The more particular Examination of Conſcience and Life, I refer to the ſolemn Day deſign'd; only two or three Particulars I ſhall take Notice of, which are ſo obvious, that they need no ſearch. I ſtill find Cauſe of the old Complaint of Pride and Vanity upon ſeveral Occaſions: I hope I have got ſome Ground of it, but it's far from being mortified as it ought to be. I find myſelf yet addicted to, and often falling into the Sin of Backbiting and Detraction. I find myſelf the laſt Year more pleaſed with the World, and more keen in the Proſecution of it than I uſed to be. Oh! for Help againſt this Enemy. I find Thoughts of Dying not ſo grateful to me as ſometimes they have been: There's a ſtrange and unuſual Damp upon my Mind when I look into the other World, and I know not how many fooliſh Queſtions ariſe about ſeparate Spirits, where they are, what they do and enjoy. Once I could rejoice at the Thoughts of putting off the Body; but now 'tis leſs ſo; though ſtill I hope I can ſay, I would not part with my Proſpects of another World for a thouſand ſuch Worlds as this: And I have, upon ſome Occaſions of Trial, the laſt Year, wofully miſmanaged, as noted in my Diary. Lord, pity and relieve a poor diſtemper'd Creature, that deſires now to lye at thy Foot, waiting for thy Salvation.

If God will pleaſe to afford me another Year, to the Beginning of which he has brought me, I purpoſe and reſolve, by his Grace——to hold on in the Courſe of Religion I have for ſome time been engaged in, though with all the Improvement I can make. To watch againſt the Miſcarriages of the laſt Year, the Temptations I ſuffer'd moſt by, the Snares I fell into. To purſue the good Rules I have heretofore ſet myſelf, and which I have found

found of no ſmall Advantage; theſe I purpoſe to reviſe, add to, or change, as I ſee Occaſion. I reſolve to ſpend a Day, or part of a Day, once in—Weeks, in Faſting or Thankſgiving, or both, as the State of my Affairs may direct and require: To lay by ſo much of my Eſtate and Income for charitable Uſes the next Year. A few Years ago I fixed the Proportion I then thought proper; but as God has proſper'd me, and very much increaſed me ſince, I muſt increaſe my Charity; and therefore I determine to add this Year----*l.* to my former Diſburſements this Way. I reſolve to be more temperate in——. I ſtill find that I often fail in that Inſtance of Self-Government; not to throw away ſo much of my Time at——: To ſet myſelf in the beſt Manner I can to mortify my—which I may call my Iniquity; I have it down in my Diary, am levelling againſt it in every Faſt, at every Sacrament, and almoſt in every Prayer; and yet have but imperfectly overcome it. Oh! for ſome farther Conqueſt this Year. Lord, help me by thy Grace! and as I am going to publick Worſhip, where I expect to hear a Sermon ſuitable to the Occaſion, I would endeavour to make a good Improvement thereof. Lord, confirm my Purpoſes, ſtrengthen me by thy Spirit, forgive the Sins of the laſt Year; may I not bring any of the Guilt of them into this? To thee I reſign myſelf, all my Powers and Faculties; my Time, Life, Intereſts, all I have and am; accept me in the Beloved. *Amen, Amen**.

Upon

* I would have given more Examples to the ſame Purpoſe, but for fear of being tedious. I deſign this to recommend ſuch Exerciſes, and as a Specimen of them: Though every one muſt conſider his own Caſe, and vary his Confeſſions, Thankſgivings,

Upon returning Home from a Journey.

Sixteenth Specimen. AS I have met with a Variety of Providences in this Journey, in which I have ſpent ſo many Weeks; I deſire now to review ſome of the more remarkable Occurrences of it, and addreſs myſelf to God with ſuitable Acknowledgments.

A great many Mercies I have to reflect upon, beſides ſuch as may be reckon'd more *common*, which yet I would not overlook (as continued Health, Safety, Succeſs in my Affairs, the Enjoyment of my Friends, and the like). There are ſome ſpecial Favours that call for more particular Remarks; As my Deliverance at —— Bridge: The Bridge was, a great Part of it, under Water by a Flood: The Horſe ſlipt off the Cauſey, that led to it, with his hinder Feet, but ſo recover'd himſelf by a ſudden Spring, that I know not which ſurpriz'd me moſt, the Greatneſs of my Danger, or of my Deliverance. I was ready to think I had Help from an inviſible Hand, and could not but reflect, with Pleaſure and Gratitude, upon that of the Pſalmiſt: *He ſhall give his Angels Charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy Ways. They ſhall bear thee up in their Hands, leſt thou daſh thy Foot againſt a Stone*, Pſal. xci. 11, 12. Bleſſed be God for the Miniſtry of theſe benign, good Spirits! How many kind Offices do they do us, that we are not aware

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Thankſgivings, and Reſolutions accordingly. I promiſe myſelf no truly ſerious Chriſtian, that is in earneſt in Religion, will object againſt this as a needleſs Labour. How much more Pains doth the Merchant take in Matters of far leſs Importance, in poſting his Books, and ſettling his Accounts, and often at this time of the Year? And muſt the Children of this World, in every Thing, ſhame the Children of Light?

of? unworthy I am of ſuch Attendance; but great is the Condeſcenſion of God to poor Creatures. I remember the Morning I was a little more particular than ordinary in my Requeſts (though I don't often, when journeying, omit the Matter) for the Protection of Angels, and had in the Morning before I roſe, ſome agreeable Thoughts on that Subject: But whether any one or more of theſe bleſſed Spirits were preſent to my Aſſiſtance or not, the Circumſtances of my Deliverance were ſuch, that I am ſure I ought not to overlook the Hand of God in it. *He deliver'd my Soul from Death, mine Eyes from Tears, and my Feet from Falling*; may I walk before the Lord in the Land of the Living!

I hope I receiv'd ſome Advantage by the different Company and Converſation I was engag'd in, particularly at—— I find there are ſome conſcientious Men, and ſavory Chriſtians in moſt Places (though, alas! too thin ſown). And I find the ſame Infirmities among other People as among my nearer Neighbours: Folly, Vanity and Sin has overſpread the World, and prevail every where; the Obſervation of which, both heretofore and now has been of uſe to me; as otherwiſe, ſo as it helps me to diſpenſe with, and bear the Infirmities of thoſe I am more conſtantly concern'd with. Whereever I go, as I carry my own Paſſions and Follies with me, I meet with Paſſions and Follies in others, as great as thoſe I complain of at Home; nor ſhall I be free of this Exerciſe, till I get among the good People of Heaven—— Lord, fit me for the bleſſed Day. As we are apt to think former times better than theſe, ſo to think good Men at a Diſtance, better than thoſe of our Acquaintance; one Reaſon is, the Infirmities of the one fall more under our Obſervation than the Infirmities of the other.

ther. I am thankful for the Admonition and Help I have had in this Journey by the Providence, and I hope Spirit of God, in ſome Points of Importance, particularly in this.

On Lord's Day, *June*——I lay at——I went to publick Worſhip; and as I had Reaſon, from the Character of the Preacher, to expect ſomething entertaining and inſtructive, I took ſome Notes of the Sermon; and hope I ſhall not ſoon forget the warm and ſerious Admonition he gave his Auditory againſt loving the World; he deſcribed a Lover of the World, offer'd ſeveral very pertinent Arguments againſt it. Many Things came cloſe to my Conſcience. When I return'd to my Inn, I retired into my Chamber, and found Matter for ſome ſerious Exerciſe, in which, if I miſtake not, I had the comfortable Preſence of God. Next Lord's-Day I had no Opportunity of going to Church, unleſs I ſpent a good Part of the Day on Horſeback, and therefore I rather choſe to keep in my Inn, and make the beſt I could of my Time in private; for I muſt own I can't approve the Way of thoſe that make no Scruple to travel on the Lord's-Day, almoſt all of it, provided they can get to Church any Part of it, and hear a Sermon, or ſleep whilſt it's delivered; I am afraid the Buſineſs of hearing a Sermon at ſuch a Place, is moſtly a Pretence, to excuſe the true Deſign of Travelling, *viz.* to get forward on the Journey. I took the Opportunity of my Retirement that Day, to think over the Affairs of my Journey; ſpent ſome Time in Thankſgiving, Confeſſion, Petition, and hope my Time was not altogether loſt. On *Thurſday* in the Forenoon, in my Road between—— Having no Company, I endeavour'd to employ my Thoughts upon ſerious Subjects, which God enabled me to do with ſome Profit and

Comfort. When I came to—— I had the Company of——a Relation I had not ſeen for ſome time. I found them in very comfortable Circumſtances, and, which not a little pleas'd me, looking towards Heaven, as I hope. Bleſſed be God for this high Inſtance of his Favour; what ſhall I render? make deeper Impreſſions, *&c.* I am humbled and aſtoniſh'd to think I was no more uſeful in my Converſe with 'em; I ſtill want Skill and Zeal for ſuch Applications to my Friends, for their ſpiritual Good, as would well become me. I am often ſeiz'd with a dumb Devil; however, I would hope I was not wholly uſeleſs. When I came Home I found all well—— Thus Mercy and Goodneſs ſtill follows me; has done ſo eminently in this Journey; *I will praiſe thee, O Lord, my God, with all my Heart, and will glorify thy Name for evermore.*

Some Diſappointments * met with; particularly in my Concern with —— and in —— many Failings and Miſcarriages I have to bewail. I can-

* The various Occaſions of Perſons in their Journeys, and the different Buſineſs they are employed in, whether as Merchants, Miniſters, *&c.* together with the great Variety there will be in their Caſes, both with reſpect to Mercies, Diſappointments, Miſcarriages, and the like, muſt govern and direct the Manner of theſe ſerious Exerciſes I am here ſetting an Example of. I don't expect the Company of any of the Scorners, ſo far thro' this Work; but if any of theſe Men of Senſe and Wit (as they think themſelves) ſhould happen to take up this Book inſtead of the *Fortunate Miſtreſs*, &c. and lighting upon theſe or the like Paſſages, ſhould, as their Manner is, cry out of *Cant*, I would deſire them not to ſpeak Evil of Things they know not. The Chriſtian, however, is ſo much convinc'd of his Duty herein (*acknowledging God in all his Ways*) and finds ſo much Comfort in ſuch a Courſe, that I am perſuaded he will not be laughed out of it. If this be to be enthuſiaſtick and vile, he will reſolve to be more vile ſtill.

not charge my ſelf with Injuſtice towards my Neighbour; with Lying, or any other groſs Sin; but have been far from acting with that Circumſpection, Exactneſs, and *Decorum* that becomes a Chriſtian; there has been much Levity and Unprofitableneſs, and often Pride and Vanity in my Converſe. I have not watch'd and kept my Garments, but walk'd naked, and they have ſeen my Shame. I met with ſome Men of looſe Principles at—— who gave Vent to their Folly very freely, and foam'd out their own Shame; but had not Preſence of Mind, and Courage enough to rebuke them, and plead the Cauſe of Religion as I ought; and alas! how little Skill at beſt have I for ſuch Service? I took too much Liberty at my Inn at—— and went to Bed with little Acknowledgment of God. My Thoughts, when riding alone, were frequently vain, idle, and ſometimes worſe. I ſpent the greateſt Part of one Lord's-Day fooliſhly and ſinfully in Company——Forgive, Lord, my manifold Iniquity. I bleſs thee, Things are no worſe with me, and for the Favours of thy Providence towards me thorough this Journey. O! pardon the Sins of it. I purpoſe to act with more Caution for the future; particularly when I have any Journey before me of Importance, I purpoſe to ſpend ſome Time in Prayer before I ſet out, with Reference to it, beſpeaking the divine Preſervation, Preſence, Conduct and Bleſſing. I purpoſe with more Care to guard my Thoughts when travelling alone. There is ſome Truth in that Saying, that *every Man alone is* aut Angelus, aut Diabolus, *either an Angel, or a Devil.* I don't expect the Entertainment pious Mr. *Flavel* had in his Journey; but if my Mind be furniſh'd for ſuch Work, and bent that way, I may have (as many a one has had) no ſmall Refreſhment and real Intercourſe with God

on

on theſe Occaſions, reflecting on the Providences of God towards me, his kind and gracious Diſpenſations, on my own Sins and Wants, ſending up frequent devout Petitions to Heaven, praiſing God, reſigning myſelf to him, my Concerns, my Family, any ſpecial Affairs in View, and that are depending, *&c.* Lord, help me thus to employ myſelf, and improve my Time in journeying, as I have Opportunity. When I come to my Inn, every Night, I would immediately, or ſoon, retire and acknowledge God in the Safety, Comforts and ſeveral Occurrences of the Day. I would endeavour to be chearful and pleaſant in Company, tho' with Caution, watching againſt Lightneſs, Raillery, bearing hard upon any, and making Sport with their Weakneſſes, againſt Vanity, Romancing, Lying, ſtill ſetting the Lord before me, and carrying my Religion along with me, in my Diverſions as well as Buſineſs. When I return home, I would always review my Journey, not only my Expences and my Accounts, but my Sins and my Mercies; bring theſe into my Oratory, and give them a proper Place in my Devotion. O! for deeper Impreſſions from above. Lord, renew a right Spirit within me.

On the Death of ſeveral intimate Friends.

Seventeenth Specimen.

SEveral of my particular Acquaintance, and ſome of my very intimate Friends, have lately been removed into the other World, and more than one or two of them by a very ſhort Sickneſs. It wou'd argue ſtrange Stupidity in me, to let all this paſs without any ſerious Thoughts, tho', alas! they have been too few, and too cold. Among other

Things I can't but reflect on the diſtinguiſhing Providence of God in ſparing me. 'Tis no doubt a Mercy, and demands my Acknowledgment, tho' methinks there is ſomething humbling in it: They are ſafe landed, got home, advanc'd to the higher Services and Enjoyments of the Church above, and I am left behind in a World of Sin and Sorrow, Temptations and Snares. Had I been as well prepar'd as they, ſurely my Preferment had not been delay'd. I know we are apt to ſpeak, even of ſuch Perſons as I have my Eye upon, with a ſort of Lamentation, as if this World was their only Happineſs, and Death their Undoing. He's dead, POOR MAN; a Language and Stile, I confeſs, I don't underſtand in the Mouth of a Chriſtian. How odd wou'd it look to ſay in Earneſt and with an Air of Seriouſneſs and Concern, of the Mariner that has been long toſs'd at Sea, and but narrowly eſcap'd being ſhipwrack'd, *poor Man*, he is got into his Harbour? Religion teaches us otherwiſe, *Bleſſed are the Dead that dye in the Lord:* And thus I ought to think of my Friends; I cannot queſtion it concerning ſome of them: They are enter'd into Reſt, *have fought the good Fight, finiſh'd their Courſe*, and are now triumphing with their Lord, whilſt I am yet in the Field of Battle, ſowing in Tears. However there is this Mercy in it, and I would chiefly on this account eſteem the Continuance of Life a Mercy; *that I have a longer Seed-time*, and more Opportunity to prepare for Eternity. Help me, Lord, to apply myſelf with Diligence to my proper Work, and I deſire patiently to wait thy Time for my Diſmiſſion.

Some

Some Circumſtances in the Death of my Friends, whom I have followed to the Grave within a few Months paſt, particularly the Suddenneſs of it, brought to my Mind a Queſtion I have heard debated in Converſation, and found debated in Books, viz. *Whether ſudden Death* (in the proper Senſe of the Word, as it notes a Death without much Warning) *be an Evil*, and whether 'tis fit to pray againſt it? As to which my Thoughts are, that 'tis either deſirable, or otherwiſe, according as the State of Things are with us. To ſuch as are in a good Meaſure prepar'd for Death, it can never be unſeaſonable; and often the Suddenneſs of it may be reckon'd a Felicity to them, eſpecially if the Shots of Death have been the conſtant Matter of their Exerciſe, as is the Caſe of ſome very ſerious Perſons, and was of one of my lately deceaſed Friends; the Suddenneſs of whoſe Death I could not but look upon as a ſignal Favour: They had ſcarce Time to view an Enemy, the Proſpect of which at a Diſtance fill'd them with Terror. They went through the Valley of Death, ſcarce knowing where they were: How often have I ſeen them in their Bondage, crying out; O! how ſhall I grapple with Death? I can't bear the Thoughts of it; whereas Death ſtealing upon them in this manner, they fell by it, without ſeeing its Dart, which they us'd to foreſee with ſo much Dread. *Get thee up*, ſaid God to *Moſes, to Mount Nebo, and die there. Deut.* xxxii. 49, 50. *and there he died according to the Word of the Lord*, Deut. xxxiv. 5. The *Rabbins* ſay, his Soul departed with a Kiſs, or that God took it out of the Body with a Kiſs. He ſeems to have had an *Euthanaſie*, a calm eaſy Death, free from the Violence of Diſtempers, and the Reluctancy of his own Mind. A ſudden Death has

this Advantage in it often; it prevents the many tedious Conflicts good Men ſo much fear'd: They get away without paſſing through the more ſolemn Forms of dying, and without ſuffering the fruitleſs, but troubleſom Care and Endeavours of Phyſicians and Friends, to detain them: Nor do they only eſcape the Dread, but in a great Meaſure the Pains of dying; I mean thoſe Sickneſſes, Faintings, Decays and manifold Sorrows; the wearyſom Nights and Days that attend a long Illneſs, gradually introduce Death, and are frequently more grievous than Death it ſelf: Certainly 'tis not deſirable to languiſh on a Sick-bed Years or Months. Who would not chuſe, if it ſo pleaſe God, to paſs more immediately from Action and Service to Honour, rather than wear out the poor Remainder of a uſeleſs Life in Sighs and Groans?

On the other Hand, it muſt be granted that a little Warning may be a Favour to good Men, in ſome Circumſtances; as it gives them an Opportunity for ſuch Services as may yet remain to be done, or want to be reviſed, and better done: The ſetting their Houſe in order, taking a more ſolemn Leave of Friends and Relations, exerciſing Repentance and other Graces, trimming their Lamps for the Bridegroom's coming, *&c.* But after all I deſire to be intirely reſign'd in this Matter, leaving myſelf nothing to chuſe, but refer all to the great Lord and Sovereign of Life. The only Thing I would be concern'd about, is that I may not be ſurpriz'd, but be in a conſtant Readineſs, have all things ſet in order; my Houſe, my Heart in order, that no Work neceſſary for a ſafe and comfortable Death may be left undone, that whenever Death comes, I may be able to bid it welcome.

And

And O! that God would help me to make ſome right Improvement of theſe Providences: I think myſelf many ways a Loſer by the Death of my dear Friends; I may alſo gain by it, if it be not my own Fault. In order to which I would endeavour to follow them in my Thoughts into the other World: Sometimes I find myſelf diſpos'd to do ſo, and ready to wiſh, O! that I was with them. I have had ſome Hours of comfortable Converſe with them; but how much better Company would they be now, were I fit to be join'd to their Aſſembly, and have a Place among them. Lord, when ſhall it be! I would endeavour to copy after them, and learn their Excellencies. How charitable and compaſſionate was good——How ſerious in Worſhip? I remember an Hymn ſhe ſometimes uſed when joining in Prayer: I have thought of it ſome ſcores of times ſince her Death. I could not but look upon it ſomewhat like the Stamp of the Foot in Muſick, for keeping the Time. How mortify'd to the World and ſpiritually minded was the pious——He ſeem'd to have no Care but about his Soul and Eternity: He was ſo much above the World, that he was almoſt out of it before he died, and indeed could ſcarce think or ſpeak of any thing elſe with Pleaſure, but Heaven, and what concern'd the Way to it. How uſeful a Man was the judicious Mr——uſeful in the Neighbourhood, and eminently ſo in the Church to which he belong'd: He was none of thoſe that minded his own things, with a Neglect of the Things of Chriſt: He was a Lover of Hoſpitality and of good Men; charitable to his Enemies, and always faithful and affectionate to his Friend. How meek, lowly, broken and contrite was dear——; almoſt always condemning herſelf, and lying in Sack-cloth: Every Body could

ſee eminent Graces in her, but herſelf. I reckon indeed ſhe ſuffer'd ſome Diſadvantage from her bodily Conſtitution, which made her State and Walk leſs comfortable; however it was ſafe, and I obſerv'd her latter End was Peace; eminently ſo. Lord, pity a poor Creature, vile, worthleſs, and almoſt loſt to every good Work; thus left behind by my Friends, every way behind: Behind in a dark ſinful World, and behind in Attainments, Temper and Frame. How unlike am I to thyſelf? how unlike to ſome of thy Servants? But thou haſt the Reſidue of the Spirit: Make me more like thine, and it will be a good Evidence I am thine, and ſhall at laſt be with them. Help me to keep in Mind, and imitate their Graces, and to be a Follower of them, who through Faith and Patience inherit the Promiſes.*

On the ſeveral Ages of Life.

Specimen Eighteen. I Was in Company the other Night, when it was diſcours'd, what Age of Life is moſt deſirable? With moſt indeed ſuch a Queſtion is eaſily

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* Whatever Diſputes there are about *commemorative* Days. Days kept in memory of Saints departed, whether lawful and convenient, I think it paſt Diſpute that we ought one way or other to remember them; and the Deſign of this Specimen is to invite and divert the Reader to one way that here is unexceptionable. We ſhould often think of our ſerious departed Friends, ſet their Example before us, get into their Company in the other World; many Advantages may accrue to us from thence, and I reckon it eſpecially ſeaſonable when they have newly left us.

reſolv'd,

reſolv'd, who can think of no Age but the *Vigour of Youth*, with any Satisfaction. One Perſon was mention'd, who has ſcarce reach'd forty, and yet has been heard ſeveral times to expreſs his Concern that he was ſo far advanc'd, and like ſo ſoon to leave this *dear World*, or at leaſt ſuffer an Abatement of its Pleaſures: Nor is this ſo different from the common Sentiments of Mankind, as to be thought very peculiar. Alas! *I am on the wrong Side* 50, is a Saying, which tho' ſometimes deliver'd with an Air of jeſting, has a great deal of the inward Senſe of the Speaker in it: Nothing more terrible to many, to the moſt, than Age, the *Devil of old Age*; they dread it as Miſery and Undoing. And indeed, was the Happineſs of the Body, or that the Body is the Inſtrument and Channel of the proper Happineſs of a reaſonable Creature, there would be ſome Senſe in their Reſentment, becauſe as the Body grows old, and decays, the Pleaſures and Happineſs of it muſt in courſe decay alſo; on which account there can't be a more deplorable Caſe than that of the poor Senſualiſt, who knows no Life but that of the Animal, and conſequently whoſe Happineſs muſt be continued within the narrow Bounds of 40 or 50 Years at the moſt.

The Converſation led me a little to reflect upon this Matter, and particularly to conſider with myſelf, what Age of Life ought to be eſteem'd by a wiſe and good Man, as moſt ſignificant and valuable. Life is divided into different Periods: We don't come into the World in our full Stature and Capacity, and die in the ſame State, but paſs through different Stages, as Infancy, Childhood, Youth, Manhood, and old Age. Cuſtom and common Eſtimation has taught us thus to diſtinguiſh Life, and the Scripture ſeems to countenance ſuch a Diſtinction.

How

How to fix the preciſe Limits of theſe ſeveral Periods, may not be very eaſy, nor is it of much Conſequence. *Infancy* is the firſt and ſhorteſt Stage of Life: I don't mean in the Law-ſenſe of the Word, according to which all are Infants under the Age of 21, but in vulgar Acceptation; and we may allow to it four or five Years. *Childhood* may be extended to about 12 Years, at which time, according to the Jewiſh Doctors, Perſons begin to be *ſui juris*, capable of making Vows and the like. *Youth* reaches to about 20, and Manhood to the Time when the Strength and Vigour of Nature begins to be impair'd, and from thence *old Age* creeps on us. Which of theſe ought to have the Preference, is the Queſtion; and to be ſure *Infancy* has no Claim to it; the Man can ſcarce be ſaid then to live. tho' the Animal doth. In the next Stage Reaſon begins to bloſſom, and the Mind to open, and in the following (Youth) the Faculties thereof gradually exert themſelves: But how low our Reaſon? How weak our Judgment? *When I was a Child, I ſpoke as a Child, I underſtood as a Child, I thought as a Child,* 1 Cor. xiii. 11. And with how much Infirmity, that is, they that have paſs'd thro' that State, and have put away childiſh Things, know. *Youth* ſeems to have a little more of the Rational in it, but almoſt infinite are the Dangers and Follies that attend it: So few get thorough this Stage without Falls, Ruin, or at leaſt Hurt, that no wiſe Man, when he comes to look back upon it, would deſire to return into it again. The Paths of Youth are ſlippery Paths. Whatever young Perſons think of themſelves, of their Conduct and Meaſures of acting, their thoughtful ſollicitous Friends can't but obſerve them with Pity and Fear: They are generally exceeding wiſe, though without all Experience,

perience, raſh in their Judgments, peremptory in their Reſolutions, impetuous in their Deſires, and eager in their Purſuits; ſo that they do little that will bear the Examination of a more mature calm Age; much that requires Repentance; little that will afford Comfort in the Review. And often we ſee ſuch Steps then taken as lay the Foundation of many Sorrows, through the whole After-life. In ſhort, every one that conſiders the Circumſtances of this Age, muſt give into *Solomon*'s Cenſure, *Eccleſ.* xi. 10. *Childhood and Youth are Vanity.*

The next Period, that *of Manhood*, reckoning from a little above 20 to 50, may be thought the beſt of our Time, and 'tis granted it has many Advantages, but not without many Allays. A good part of it is ordinarily ſpent before we get quit of that fooliſh Dream of an earthly Happineſs, with which we are ſo apt to entertain our ſelves in our firſt ſetting out in the World. We are buſie a great while in trying and proving the fine Scenes we had painted on our Imaginations; and indeed not ſo much lay aſide our former Vanity as turn it towards other Objects, for what Difference is there between him that notes upon a Bag of Money, and him that plays with an Hobby-horſe, ſave that the grown Child is a more Child? So that upon the whole (a religious Biaſs and Temper of Mind being ſuppos'd, which it muſt be allow'd the former Years moſt fitly ſerve to introduce) I can't but reckon the latter Stage of Manhood, *between* 50 *and* 60, preferable to any other; the moſt important Opportunity of Life. Youthful Heat and Fervour begin now to abate: The Judgment is ordinarily come to a full Maturity: The World has ſhewn itſelf an Impoſtor in all its Forms. By this Time ſure, if ever, we ſhall be convinc'd, how little

little it can contribute to our true Happineſs: Some more eminent Degree of Mortification, and manifold Experience in the ſeveral Branches of Religion may now be expected; ſo that in this Stage the Chriſtian ſets out with a greater Stock, and richer Furniture of Knowledge. And on theſe accounts, as well as many others, I apprehend the common Saying exceeding heterodox, that a Perſon is on the wrong Side of 50, when he is turned of it. I ſhould rather call it the *right Side*, not only as he is nearer Heaven, but as he is in his moſt improveable Age, in the *very prime of Life*. And as by the Providence of God I am now brought to this Period, I would endeavour to take the Advantage of it, conſider and improve it as my beſt Opportunity for Religion and another World. Lord, direct and aſſiſt me by thy Grace.

In order to it I purpoſe and would endeavour, (1) ſuitably to review the former Stages of Life, to conſider my Dangers, Mercies, Deliverances and Sins. I thank God that I have not Religion now to begin; that I have been preſerv'd and kept hitherto. I have taken many falſe and fooliſh Steps, and have Reaſon to weep over every Age. Oh! how many my Miſcarriages! but bleſſed be God I have not made Shipwrack of Faith and a good Conſcience. Much has been amiſs, and might, I ſee, have been mended; I deſire to be thankful in the mean time Things are no worſe. 'Tis a Pleaſure to me to think I am got ſo far thro' Life, with ſome comfortable Hope of Heaven (ador'd be divine Grace.) I ſhould be loth to go back again, as meanly as I have acted, unleſs I was ſure to eſcape the Follies I have run into; much leſs would I deſire it for the ſake of youthful Pleaſures and Enjoyments: I know by woful Experience how vain,

vain, deceitful and treacherous these are, and am thankful I am got so far through them, and deliver'd from them. I hope I do not look back with Regret that they are over, crying out with the poor Sensualist, *O that I was young!* I have an higher Game, a more noble Prize; may I constantly press forward towards it. (2) I would endeavour to disingage myself from the World, withdraw my Affections from it, be getting it out of my Hands as much as my Circumstances will allow; however out of my Heart: I leave others to pursue Projects for this World, it becomes me to be taking leave of it, and turning my Shots another way. (3) I purpose to correct, as far as I can, former Mistakes; to mark and avoid the Rocks I have split upon, or been in Danger of. If I am to learn Wisdom and Caution by the Experience of others (*felix quem faciunt*, &c.) much more by my own. (4) To look upon this part of Life as more especially due to Religion. Let my Children and Juniors mind the World, my Care shou'd lie very much another way: Life is short and uncertain; this is the most profitable Time of Life, *my harvest*. I wou'd be up, and doing, and now at last remember *one thing is needful*. (5) I wou'd take care not to lose my Time, either by Idleness or Impertinency, doing nothing, or nothing to the purpose, but desire to be employ'd in such Things as most directly concern my *high Calling*, and will turn to best account at last, not pursuing Riches, Fame, *&c.* but attending the proper Duties of my Station, and the Work of Religion, that is in the nearest Connexion with Heaven. Lord help me to do this; lead me in thy Truth, and teach me: Direct me to my Duty, assist and succeed me in it; and if I shall live through this Period,

Period, to old Age, may it be a good old Age full of the Fruits of Righteouſneſs. Save me from the common Infirmity and Diſgrace of old Age, *Covetouſneſs*. Why ſhou'd I graſp a Shadow that is flying from me? Purſue and hug the World ſo inordinately, when I am juſt ready to leave it? Nothing more incongruous than this. O! my God, take me under thy Conduct, be with me in the remaining Part of my Journey and Warfare, and in this Stage particularly: Keep me from the Evil of the World, from all Apoſtacy and Declining: May my Path be as the ſhining Light that ſhines more and more unto the perfect Day: May my future Time and Life be ſacred to Religion, and wholly ſet apart for God, that I may review it with Pleaſure, and have the Comfort of it in old Age, on a Death-bed, and to Eternity. Amen, Amen.

On human Friendſhip.

Nine teenth Specimen.

I Have lately had Occaſion to reflect upon the Nature, Principles, and Inſtability of human Friendſhip. Several Incidents have led me to this; and when I conſider the Matter a little, the Grounds upon which the Generality proceed in it, the Motives to it and Meaſures of it, I ceaſe to wonder that 'tis ſo corrupt, ſo precarious, and ſo uncomfortable: Not only Humour, Whim and Fancy, but often downright Iniquity is the Foundation on which it ſtands. Perſons recommend themſelves to others by their Vices, as is every day evident in numerous Examples: The Pimp eſtabliſhes a Friendſhip with the Adulterer, the Drunkard with his Com-

Companion, who loves the Sot for no other reaſon but becauſe he is like himſelf; and I have often ſeen the Detracter and Tale-bearer get into the very Souls of ſome Perſons that reliſh that vicious Converſation, and ſecure an Intereſt with them, which no real Goodneſs cou'd hope to do: And how great a Stroke have Sycophants, the Obſequious and Fawners, with Mankind? They are aware of the blind ſide of their Neighbours, and by ſoothing their natural Paſſions, Pride, Self-love and Vanity, make them their Property, and carry all before them. In the mean time, how rare is virtuous Friendſhip, founded upon real Merit and Goodneſs, cultivated and improv'd according to the Rules of Religion, and for the Purpoſes of it? that is conducted according to the Laws, and in Subſerviency to the Ends of true Friendſhip? Or if there ſeem to be ſomething of this in the Beginning of the Friendſhip, how nice and fickle is it? Sometimes our Friends will deſert us upon a very ſlight Occaſion, and which was really none, had it been rightly underſtood; ſometimes out of meer Humour, we can never learn why; ſometimes even when we are contriving the beſt Offices of Kindneſs towards them we are capable of; ſometimes when we are purſuing our Duty and acting in that Purſuit, to the Conviction of their Conſcience, as well as with the Teſtimony of our own; yet if the Thing be not popular, if it fall under the Cenſure of others, if it interfere with any little Intereſt or Paſſion of theirs, or the Methods of acting be not agreeable to their Guſt, you are given up, there is an end of the Friendſhip, and it may be not only Coolneſs, but Enmity ſucceeds.

O my Soul! learn Wiſdom; endeavour for ſome Inſtructions by ſuch Inſtances as theſe, ſo frequently diſplay'd, and even juſt now, before thy Eyes.

Lord, be my Teacher. I would endeavour among other Things, as the Improvement of ſuch Providences, (1) To leſſen, and in a great Meaſure withdraw my Dependence on Men: May I ceaſe from Man! *all Men are Liars,* (i. e.) defectible, changeable, and may deceive. (2) To be ſteddy and faithful in my Friendſhip; this I ſhould learn from the Reſentment I feel in myſelf of the Treachery and Unſteadineſs I have experienced. (3) To bear, with as much Calmneſs as I can, Diſappointments of this kind. Such is the Frailty of human Nature, that I muſt expect them, and therefore ſhould provide for them. (4) To make God my Friend, and he will never deceive nor forſake me. (5) To ſecure the Teſtimony, and rejoicing of my own Conſcience: And in order to this, (6) To keep on in the Way of Duty, with a generous Neglect of the Opinions, Favour and Frowns of others. *Amicus Plato,* &c. Truth and Duty ſhould be dearer to me than the Applauſes of all the World. (7) To wait for the State of perfect Love and Friendſhip above. Lord, aſſiſt me herein. May I expect leſs from the Creature, more from thyſelf: I am willing my Encouragements to, and in my Duty, ſhould be all deriv'd from Heaven; thy Acceptance, thy Smiles are enough: If my Friends approve me, and are with me in the Way of my Duty, 'tis well, I deſire to be thankful, but if not, I deſire to be eaſy; my Eye is to the Hand of my Maſter. *There is none on Earth I deſire beſides thee.* In thy Favour is Life, and thy loving Kindneſs is better than Life.

Oh

On a ſpecial Inſtance of Diligence in worldly Affairs.

T'Other Night the Practice of a Gentleman (pretty remarkable for raiſing a large Eſtate by his own Induſtry) was mention'd in Company where I was; and I had heard it mention'd ſome time before, not without ſuch Praiſes as are generally beſtow'd on them that do well for themſelves. He would be up, and in his Counting-houſe by three a-Clock in the Morning, and abroad about his Buſineſs by ſix; and this not accidentally and occaſionally, but it was his Practice, even on the coldeſt Day in Winter. When I heard this, I muſt confeſs, it ſtrangely leſſen'd the Value of ſuch Induſtry with me, to conſider *that it reſpected the Things of this World only*, Things of ſo little Importance and Duration: Had this Labour not been about the *Meat that periſheth*, but that *which endureth to everlaſting Life*, the Affairs of the Soul and Eternity, it had been ſomething; but as it was, methinks, 'tis *magno conatu nihil agere*, to take a great deal of Pains about nothing. *Specimen Twentieth.*

But, O my Soul, canſt thou not learn ſomething from hence? How do ſuch Examples reproach thy Coolneſs, Sloth and Indifferency in the high and momentous Concerns of another World? 'Tis ſaid of a good Man, that when he obſerv'd an immodeſt Woman ſpend ſeveral Hours in decking and preparing herſelf to pleaſe a wanton Lover, he wept on the Reflection, *that it was more than he had done that Day to pleaſe God, and adorn his Soul.* Lord, quicken me to my Duty. Shall Men of Buſineſs be thus reſolute in Purſuit of this World, deny their Eaſe, and abridge their Reſt, to ſettle their Accounts, and manage their Trade; and ſhall I

find no Zeal in the Work of Heaven, when I have infinitely greater Things in View, the true Riches, the Gold tried in the Fire? For not only the after Recompence, the eternal Weight of Glory the Prize of the *high Calling*, ſurpaſſes all their Gain, but even the preſent Improvement of one Grace is exceedingly preferable to it: *The Trial of Faith is much more precious than of Gold that periſheth*, 1 Pet. i. 7. And what ſhall I ſay of Communion and Intercourſe with God? Is not this a more excellent, delightful and profitable Employment? Shall the Merchant leave his Bed ſo early, for the low dull Work of Per-centing, *&c.* and ſhall I redeem no Minutes from Sleep, Diverſions, Company, *&c.* for Converſe with Heaven! Think, O my Soul, of the Example before thee; think of the Example of thy Lord and Maſter, who roſe up a great while before Day, and *departed into a ſecret Place and pray'd*, Mark i. 35. At three a-clock in the Morning in the Counting-houſe! But when in the Oratory? Lord, make me as wiſe for my Soul, as others are for their Bodies; and when the Accounts come to be caſt up at laſt, I know who will be richeſt.

On the Failings of good Men, and the Reſentment we are apt to have of them.

Specimen twenty firſt.

AMong the many Exerciſes and Trials that attend us thorough this State of Imperfection, Sin and Vanity, the Failings of thoſe I converſe with, are not the leaſt; and methinks I find a greater Senſe of theſe, and myſelf more aggriev'd by them than formerly, or indeed than ever be-

fore *, whether this be owing to them or myſelf: That they are more apt to ſhew their Faults, or I more apt to eſpy them, is a Queſtion I ſhou'd inquire into. It wou'd be Vanity in me to make it an Argument of greater Virtue, as proceeding from more Experience, a better Taſte of Things, and a quicker Apprehenſion of what is good, juſt and right, and the contrary. Tho' I doubt not this is ſometimes the Caſe, verifying that of *Solomon*, Eccl. i. 18. *In much Wiſdom there is much Grief, and he that increaſeth Knowledge, increaſeth Sorrow.* But whatever be the Occaſion, the Exerciſe is real, and the Burden of it ſometimes ſo great, that I think myſelf oblig'd to conſider the Matter, and endeavour my own Relief.

And may I not be miſtaken, and carry Things too far in my Cenſure of others? Probably what I eſteem a Fault, is none, or at leaſt they do not apprehend it to be ſo: If it be a Fault, they may not often be guilty of it: I may take them at a Diſadvantage, and ſee them in one of their worſt Moods. That way of acting and ſpeaking, that is ſo offenſive to me, may not be their Manner. I don't know the Reſentment they have of it themſelves: I ſee the Folly, but do not ſee the Cenſure of it afterwards; do not ſee them on their Knees or Faces, bewailing their Infirmity, and condemning themſelves with more Severity than I condemn

* I am ſuppoſing this to be the preſent Caſe of the Criſtian, whom I perſonate in the Vindication; and as I apprehend it would be of ſingular uſe for ſerious Perſons to bring their particular Caſes, Temptations, Trials, and the more inſtructive Occurrences in Providence into their Oratories and Devotion, ſtate and argue them with their own Souls and before God, I would accordingly recommend the Practice, and have given ſome Examples of what I intend.

them. In ſhort, we are very incompetent Judges of all the Failings of others, as not being able to take in all that belongs to the Caſe; and therefore ſhou'd not be ready and forward to paſs a Judgment, eſpecially an uncharitable one: And beſides, if they have their Infirmities, have they not their Excellencies too, their bright as well as dark Side? And why ſhou'd I not look at the one as well as the other? Have not I Infirmities, as well as others? Am I not conſcious of as bad Things in myſelf, as I complain ſo much of in others, if not in the ſame, yet in a different Kind? And why ſo indulgent of my own Infirmities, and ſo ſevere towards thoſe of other People? I expected more Prudence, Wiſdom, Gentleneſs, Meekneſs, Charity, Uſefulneſs from ſuch and ſuch; more Reverence in Devotion, a greater *Decorum* in their Conduct; but how defective am I in theſe and many other Things myſelf? O my Soul! take thyſelf to task here; *firſt caſt the Beam out of thy own Eye, and then ſhalt thou ſee more clearly to caſt the Mote out of thy Brother's Eye.*

Nor may I be ſufficiently appriz'd of it, how much real Infirmity and Evil there is in this Temper of mine, *reſenting ſo deeply the Infirmities of others.* The Wiſdom that is from above, is firſt pure, then peaceable, gentle and eaſy to be intreated, full of Mercy and good Fruits, *without Partiality* (ἀδιάκριτος); the Word may be as well render'd, not cenſorious, without critical Severity in judging others, as a great Man * obſerves, who adds, "They that "have moſt of this Wiſdom, are leaſt rigid to "thoſe that have leſs of it: I know no better E-"vidence of the Strength of Grace, than to bear "much with thoſe that are weak in it." To the ſame Purpoſe another devout † Perſon, "It is often "our own Imperfection, that makes us reprove "the

* Bp. *Leighton* Serm. 1. p. 5.

† Life of Monſ. *de Fenelon*, p. 292.

" the Imperfections of others: 'Tis a ſharp-ſighted " penetrating Self-love, which never pardons the " Self-love of another. The Paſſions of other " Men ſeem infinitely ridiculous, and inſupport- " able to him that is given up to his own. Divine " Charity makes great Allowances for the Weak- " neſſes of others, bears with them, and treats them " with Gentleneſs and Condeſcenſion. It is ne- " ver overhaſty in its Proceedings. The leſs we " have of Self-love, the more eaſily we accom- " modate ourſelves to the Imperfections of others, " in order to cure them patiently. We never make " an Inciſion, without putting a great deal of " Balm upon the Wound." And elſewhere (in his Dialogues of the Dead) " A Man of imperfect " Virtue ſinks under the Weight of others Imper- " fections: Such a one ſtill loves himſelf too much " to bear with what is contrary to his own Taſte, " and to his own Maxims. Self-love will no more " endure to be contradicted by Vice, than by Vir- " tue. Imperfect Virtue is captious, cenſorious, " ſour, ſevere and implacable. Perfect Virtue is " always uniform, meek, affable and compaſſionate. " It takes every Burden upon itſelf, and thinks of " nothing but doing good. It is this Principle " of Diſintereſtedneſs, in regard to ourſelves, and " of Compaſſion for others, which is the true " Bond of Society." How juſt are theſe Senti- ments, and how much am I condemn'd by them? O! for more divine Love and Charity: The World would thereupon ſoon appear another Thing to me. I ſee the Ground of my Quarrel with others is very much in my own Breaſt: I love myſelf, and not them, and that makes me uneaſy. Had I more of the Gentleneſs, Goodneſs and Kindneſs of the Goſpel, I ſhould ſee leſs of the Infirmities of other Men; or however behold them with another Eye,

caſt a Veil over them, and turn my Reſentments chiefly againſt myſelf.

Oh! my God, form my Heart to a Correſpondence with the State of Things with me. I am compaſs'd about with Infirmities, my own, and thoſe of others, and muſt expect the Exerciſe and Trial of them. The World lieth in Wickedneſs, and as for the Church, 'tis a ſort of an Hoſpital, where all are Patients, and even the beſt are but under Cure. May I not cheriſh my own Infirmities, nor be unduly affected with the Infirmities of my Neighbours. Two or three Things I would propoſe to myſelf, and endeavour. I would not paſs over the Sins and Follies of others without any Reſentment: No Charity obliges to this; there is neither Duty nor Safety in it. *Lot* was vex'd with the filthy Converſation of the Wicked: Rivers of Tears ran down the Pſalmiſt's Eyes, becauſe Men kept not God's Law. When the *Apoſtle* ſpeaks of ſome in his Days, who were *Enemies to the Croſs of Chriſt, whoſe End was Deſtruction, whoſe God was their Belly, whoſe Glory was in their Shame, who minded earthly Things*, he could not mention them without Weeping, *Phil.* iii. 18, 19. I am not to deny or palliate the Sins of bad Men, or the Infirmities of good Men, but maintain a juſt Senſe and juſt Abhorrence of them. I purpoſe and would endeavour to withſtand the Infirmities I obſerve in others; not to think the better of Sin and Folly, becauſe of the Character of the Perſon in whom 'tis found; to put as favourable a Conſtruction as I can upon the Actions of others; to bear their real and certain Infirmities with Patience; to endeavour to help and heal the Infirmities of my Brethren, and to wait for the State above, where there ſhall be none of theſe Blemiſhes and Grievances, and where all Imperfection

tion ſhall be done away. Lord, afford me thy Teaching, the Influences of thy Spirit, correcting my Heart and Frame, and fortifying the Mind. May I in Patience poſſeſs my Soul, converſe with Mankind according to the Laws of Charity, Kindneſs and Love, and be concern'd rather to act the Part of a *Phyſician*, than a *Cenſor* among them.

Upon the firſt Audience of the Ruſſian *Extraordinary Embaſſador.* (*From Mr.* Boyle's *occaſional Reflections*, p. 337.)

Specimen Twenty ſecond.

" I See the general Expectation, that there will " be here this Night, a magnificent Appearance " has produc'd one: And as it often happens in " publick Shews, that the chief Part of them is " made by thoſe that come to ſee them; ſo here, " beſides thoſe whoſe Duty obliges them to at- " tend at the Solemnity, there is a greater Con- " courſe of fine People, of either Sex, than any " Thing of this Nature has for many Years occa- " ſion'd; and if the Embaſſador be what a Man " of his Employment ſhould be, and what ſome " ſay he is, a Perſon acquainted with the Manners " of Men, he cannot but know, that we, as other " Nations, value our own Faſhions enough, to " look upon Men diſguis'd by the *Ruſſian* Dreſs " as little better than Anticks, if not as ſome new " Kind of Northern Animals: But for all this " gazing Throng of gawdy Spectators, that were " able to put an ordinary Stranger out of Coun- " tenance, to appear in an Habit differing from " theirs, the Embaſſador, and thoſe that come a- " long with him, think not fit to decline the *Ruſ-* " *ſian* Habit and Ceremony for the *Engliſh*, but

" keep to the *Ceremonies* us'd in *Ruſſia*, as ſtrictly
" as if the Monarch of it, that ſent them thither,
" ſaw them here; and whatever thoſe may think
" of the Embaſſador, that are wont to eſtimate
" Men by the Faſhionableneſs of their Cloaths;
" yet the wiſer and more intelligent do not blame
" him for refuſing to diſparage the Faſhions of
" his own People, by appearing aſham'd of them,
" but do rather think it prudent in him, to pre-
" fer the Pleaſing his Maſter and his own Coun-
" try-men, before the gratifying of Strangers;
" ſince 'tis not here, but at home, that he expects
" the Recompence of his Behaviour and Embaſſy.

" Thus when a Chriſtian, who belongs to a ce-
" leſtial King, and whoſe *Citizenſhip is in Heaven*,
" being but a Stranger on Earth, converſes among
" the Men of the World, tho' in Matters indif-
" ferent, there is often requir'd by Prudence as
" much of Compliance, as is allow'd by Innocence;
" yet when there happens an Occaſion wherein he
" can't comply with the depraved Cuſtoms of
" thoſe among whom he lives, without diſobey-
" ing him for whom he lives, and whoſe Servant
" he is; or doing ſomething that would derogate
" from the Dignity of a Perſon related to ſuch a
" Maſter; he will then leſs conſider what may be
" thought of him by a Multitude, than what Ac-
" count he is to render to him, who has forbid-
" den Men to follow a Multitude to do Evil.
" And as he knows his Reward would be much
" leſs than he reckons upon, if it were a Thing to
" be received on Earth, not in Heaven; ſo how
" ſtrange and unfaſhionable ſoever his Conformi-
" ty to the Orders of his Sovereign may appear,
" he chuſes rather to diſpleaſe Men than God, and
" acts as both *ſeeing* and being ſeen by him that *is*
" *inviſible*."

Upon

Upon the Sight of the Effects of a Burning-glaſs.

(From Mr. Boyle, *ibid. p.* 399.)

Specimen Twenty third.

" IT is a Fault incident to many good Men to be too much indiſpos'd to entertain the Precepts of Virtue as ſuch excellent Things deſerve, in caſe thoſe that teach them do not practiſe them. There are too many that do not think themſelves oblig'd to take even the wholeſomeſt Advice from thoſe, whom they ſee more careful to give it to others, than to follow it themſelves; and ſome of them are ſo nice, that they will ſcarce read a Book of Devotion, unleſs it come, like that *St. John* eat in the Apocalypſe, *from the Hand of an Angel.* But for my Part, tho' I hope I both value and deſire religious Preachers as much as the reſt of my Brethren, yet I think it would be much to the Injury both of Scripture and Reaſon, if we ſhould ſuffer the perſonal Faults of Men to keep them from doing that good their Nature fits them for. The Etymology of the Goſpel, importing its being welcome News, it's Pity any one that teaches it, ſhould not have a Title to the Character *David* gave *Ahimaaz*, of whom he ſaid, *he is a good Man, and brings good Tidings*; but my Deſire of Piety in a Preacher is more for others ſake than mine; for I know not why Truth, which is an intellectual Thing, ſhould loſe its Nature by any moral Viciouſneſs in the Propoſer. I know there is ſomething extraordinary in the Caſe of *Noah*, who awoke from his wine, and immediately propheſied; and yet the Event verified his Predictions. Our Saviour inſtructing his Diſciples about the Scribes and Phari-

" ſees

" ſees, who ſate in *Moſes*'s Chair, at the ſame time " commands them to conform to their Doctrine, " when he forbids them to imitate their Example. " The wiſe Men did not the leſs find Chriſt at " *Bethlehem*, tho' the Prieſts and Phariſees ſent them " without accompanying them thither; and the " *Aſſyrian* General was cur'd of his Leproſy, by " following the Prophet's Preſcription, convey'd " him by that *Gehazi*, who by his unworthy Car- " riage in that Buſineſs tranſplanted (if I may ſo " ſpeak) that foul Diſeaſe into himſelf and Poſte- " rity. I will therefore conſider Sermons more " than Preachers: For as in a Burning-glaſs, tho' " the Sun-beams do but illuſtrate, not heat in their " Paſſage, they may yet by its Aſſiſtance kindle " Subjects that are more diſpos'd to receive their " Action; ſo thoſe very Truths and Notions of " a learned Preacher, which do but enlighten him, " may inflame his Hearers, and kindle in their " Hearts the Love of God: And as if a Perfume " be ſet on Fire by the Beams projected through " a Burning-glaſs (which they do not ſo much " as warm in their Paſſage) the Scent is no leſs " odoriferous and grateful, than if it had been " produc'd by an actually burning Coal; ſo neither " is that Devotion, which is kindled by the Elo- " quence of an indevout Preacher, any whit the " leſs acceptable to God, for their not being them- " ſelves affected with the Zeal they beget in others: " And what the Book of Kings relates of *Eliſha*'s " Bones, contains a far greater Miracle in the Hi- " ſtorical, than in the Allegorical Senſe, in which " 'tis no ſuch Wonder to ſee a Man rais'd to Life " by a * dead Prophet."

Upon

* I reckon the Admonition here given of an exceeding Importance,

Upon the Shop of a deformed Painter, rarely well ſtored with beautiful Pictures. (Ibid. p. 405.)

Specimen Twenty fourth.

" HERE is a Shop ſo well furniſh'd, that Beauty ſeems to have aſſumed all the Variety of Features and Complexions, ſhe can be dreſs'd in; but tho' the Limner has drawn ſome Pieces ſo like, that an actual Confronting the Artiſt's Work and Nature's would ſcarce diſtinguiſh them (ſince the former would appear to differ from the latter but in that Silence, which the latter's Admiration to ſee themſelves ſo perfectly repreſented, would impoſe;) yet is the Painter himſelf ſo deform'd a Creature, that he might draw a lovelier Face, even than any here, by drawing one perfectly unlike his own. Alas! this diſcloſeth the Difference there is betwixt being able to write fine Characters of Virtue, and the poſſeſſing it. How ridiculous ſhould I eſteem this Limner, if with all his Uglineſs he ſhould eſteem himſelf handſom, becauſe his Pencil can draw Faces that are ſo: As abſurd were it in us to grow proud of our devout Compoſures, and fancy Piety ours, becauſe our Diſcourſes can poſſibly inamour others of it. The Devil doth

portance, tho' ſuch is the Infirmity of Mankind, that few, I am afraid, are able to receive it. The Author muſt not be underſtood as if ſerious and devout Preachers were not moſt deſirable; and no queſtion ſuch are generally moſt ſucceſsful. The moſt piercing Oratory is that which comes from a warm Heart, under deep Impreſſions of God and the Divine Spirit; nor can I think the Bleſſing of Heaven often attends the Adminiſtrations of looſe vicious carnal Men, who neither believe, feel, nor care what they ſpeak.

" ſome-

" ſometimes ſuffer us unmoleſtedly to write well, " if he can but perſuade us we need do no more; " and that good Pens may diſpenſe us from good " Actions. Our Paper-wars againſt Vices are of- " tentimes like *Alexander*'s againſt the neighbouring " Nations, not out of Hatred, but Glory; not to " extirpate, but to conquer them, and manifeſt to " the World the Sufficiency of our Parts by a " Victory; after which we often treat the van- " quiſh'd Enemy with greater Courteſy than thoſe " whoſe Quarrel we undertook. Diſcourſes againſt " Vice may as well be indited by Vanity as by " Zeal, and meant to expreſs Wit, not Piety; and " if (as it chanceth but too frequently) we grow " proud of them, we do like Witches, turning " Exorciſts, only comply with Satan to caſt out " the Devil. Indeed it often happens to us, as it " once did to *Gideon*, (*Jud.* iii. 24, &c.) who of " the Spoils of God's and *Iſrael*'s conquer'd Ene- " mies made an Idol, which prov'd in the End his " and his Houſe's Snare. It was a moſt inſtructive " Check and divine Admonition that our Saviour " gave his Apoſtles, when in the Account they " brought him of their Embaſſy, they joyfully re- " lated their exerciſed Power of diſpoſſeſſing De- " vils: Notwithſtanding anſwer'd Chriſt, *in this re-* " *joice not, that Spirits are ſubject to you, but rather* " *rejoice that your Names are written in Heaven.* In " Effect, tho' *Judas* was one of the Perſons in- " veſted with this miraculous Power of caſting " Devils out of others, yet we read that *Satan* en- " ter'd into him, and that it had been good for " him that he had never been born. And tho', as " *Solomon* tells us, *he that winneth Souls is wiſe*, yet " it is he only that ſhall do, as well as teach the " Commandments, that ſhall be call'd great in the " Kingdom of Heaven, *Matt.* v. 19. The true

" Chri-

" Chriſtian ſhould be willing to impart any uſe-
" ful Diſcoveries that God ſhall pleaſe to vouch-
" ſafe him; but he will ever conſider the moſt
" taking Notions he can form of Virtue, more as
" Engagements to it, than Arguments of it: And
" ſince there is not any thing in which Charity
" ought more to begin at home, than in devout
" Inſtruction, he will endeavour to make himſelf
" as much Piety's Votary as Advocate, to immitate
" thoſe truly wiſe Men, that as they inform'd
" thoſe of *Jeruſalem* of the Star they had ſeen
" in the *Eaſt*, did themſelves follow it, till it
" brought them to Chriſt; to entitle himſelf to
" that of our Saviour (*Luke* vi. 45.) *A good Man
" out of the good Treaſure of his Heart bringeth forth
" good Things*; and (finally) to take his Celebra-
" tion of Virtue from his Experience, not his
" Fancy, as Nurſes firſt feed themſelves to nouriſh
" their ſucking Infants, to whom they give no
" Meat, which they have not in their own Breaſts
" firſt digeſted into Milk; leſt (like the Carpen-
" ters that toiled to build the Ark to ſave *Noah*
" from the Deluge, themſelves periſh'd in) *when
" he has preach'd to others, himſelf ſhould prove a
" Caſtaway.*

I have now finiſh'd the Examples; ſeveral have been offer'd of every Kind, the Reader will think, I am afraid, far more than ſufficient: And indeed they are more, not only than I deſign'd, but than I am pleaſed with, upon the Review. All I have to ſay as an Apology is, that ſeveral of the Subjects, and I hope ſeveral Thoughts upon them, will be of Uſe to ſome, who may read them for their Inſtruction, if not for their Imitation in the like Exerciſes: Nor may it be amiſs for Perſons leſs capable of thinking and compoſing for themſelves, to turn to ſuch of theſe Specimens, as they find a-

greeable to their Circumſtances, making the Changes and Alterations their Caſe may require. After all, thoſe that don't need them, or like them, may paſs them over, and there's no Hurt done.

I reckon it beſt ordinarily to recite the Meditations: Not but that Reflections may be made *occaſionally*, without the Labour of Writing, or any ſpecial Care in ranging and diſpoſing the Thoughts in a proper Method: And 'tis no ſmall Advantage that will attend theſe more tranſient Exerciſes, as they employ and improve the Mind, bring in Inſtructions from a Variety of Subjects that occur, excite Devotion, help to beget and cheriſh a ſpiritual Frame. But the Kind of Meditation I am now recommending, will require a little more Pains; and I think, ſhould for the moſt Part, at leaſt, be written. What are the *Pſalms*, but a Collection of divine Meditations, upon various Occaſions anſwerable to the Circumſtances that *David* and others (the Penmen of them) were in? 'Tis granted they had extraordinary Aſſiſtance; but that ſhould be no Objection againſt other good Men attempting the beſt they can in the ſame Way. And as 'tis evident moſt of the Pſalms are *occaſional* Meditations, in which the Compoſers had ſpecial Reference to their own Caſe, and took Riſe from thence; we ſhould, methinks, look upon their Practice as an Example to us, and ſet it before us for our Encouragement and Imitation.

But though the Meditation may be wrote, and ordinarily ſhould, it need not be long, nor need we be ſollicitous about Method, Style, and other Regularities; a few, *even extemporary*, Thoughts may ſometimes be highly uſeful—— For Inſtance: This Day I read the Life of young Mr.—— How excellent a Chriſtian was he at 25? How poor and ſorry a Creature am I at 50? I can't but remark a few

few Things concerning him, well worthy of my conſtant Imitation; as (1.) His Victory over his Paſſions; his Meekneſs, his Charity and forgiving Temper, *Page*— (2.) His Prayerfulneſs, *Page*— (3.) his Contempt of the World, *Page*— (4.) His careful Improvement of Time, *Page*—— (5.) The mighty Reverence he always expreſs'd for divine Things, not only when in Worſhip, but in common Converſation, *Page*— (6.) His Readineſs and Willingneſs to die, *Page*—— Oh! how far am I left behind by many that ſet out after me in Religion? What have I been doing all this while? like the Door upon the Hinges, running the Round of Duties in a dull, formal Manner! Lord, look down upon me in Mercy; pour out of thy Spirit upon me: It becomes me to make ſome ſerious Reſolutions on this Occaſion; particularly I purpoſe (1.)—— (2.) *&c.*——

June—— A few Days ago I fell into Company with ſome Gentlemen, particularly, Sir *Elymas*—— and ——*Spermologus*. They preſently began to cry out of Prieſtcraft, and rail at the Clergy, making them all a Pack of Villians, that only pretended Religion to cloak their Pride, domineering Spirit, and worldly Intereſt. One of them ſeem'd to make ſome Exceptions in Behalf of a few modeſt and honeſt Men, he ſuppoſed there might be among them. Another reply'd, after a profane Preface; *never a Barrel the better Herring*. I hate Prieſts of all Religions. A third, that would take it ill not to be thought the wiſeſt Man in the Company, run out into a Diſcourſe about the intolerable Abuſes the common People had ſuffer'd, and every where ſtill ſuffer, by Means of theſe Impoſtors, who had turn'd Religion into Myſtery and Nonſenſe. Do you ever hear theſe Fellows prate, ſaith he? I am forced, I own, to go to hear them ſometimes;

ſometimes; but I always relieve myſelf as ſoon as I can, by falling aſleep. This was follow'd with an high *Encomium* upon natural Religion, not without ſome bold and bad Reflections on the holy Scriptures. I muſt confeſs, I was a little ſurpriz'd with the Diſcourſe, having never met with ſuch Inſolence before, tho' I have often heard of the like from others. I thank God I am not at all ſtagger'd with ſuch weak and impotent Attacks as theſe; which I can't but look upon as the Raving of Men out of their Wits, and the laſt Efforts of Libertines, to get rid of a Book that, it may be, has a little hamper'd them, and been troubleſome to them in the Purſuit of their Luſts. I hope I am too well eſtabliſh'd in the Belief of the Bible (upon a careful Examination of the ſtrong Evidence, which recommends it to my Faith) to be moved with a few Flirts of Wit: I am ſatisfied the main Reaſon why ſuch Sparks as theſe find Fault with the Bible is, becauſe it finds ſo much Fault with them: Did they but deſire it was true, and would they be pleas'd to have it proved true, the Work was half done with them; they would ſoon get above their Prejudices, and ſee Cauſe to think it true. Nor can I help ſuſpecting their pretended Zeal for natural Religion to be a Sham. They cry up that, not that they value it, or live up to its Rules; for then they could not deſpiſe the Bible, where it appears in its greateſt Luſtre and Glory; but becauſe they can ſhape and bend it (having got quit of the Bible) according to their own Minds, *i. e.* their Paſſions and Inclinations. Natural Religion with them, is juſt what ſuits their Natures; and 'tis an admirable Scheme they form of it: They ſoon come to think God is altogether ſuch a one as themſelves (*Pſal.* l. 21.) that every Thing is lawful they deſire ſhould be ſo; that ſure *God will not damn a Man for taking a little*

little Pleaſure out of the Way; that he has not given Men ſuch ſtrong Inclinations to torment them, as would be the Conſequence, if they might not gratify them. Here the Bible ſtands before them with a drawn Sword, and riſes up againſt them with full Light, and the higheſt Authority: And hence their Quarrel with it, and in a great Meaſure with the Preachers of it. O my Soul! bleſs God that has deliver'd thee from the Deluſions of theſe unhappy Men, that has kept thee out of the Chair of the Scorner. Thou needeſt no more to convince thee of the Excellency of the Bible, than a ſerious View of the State of thoſe that want it. Pity theſe poor Creatures; their Caſe is deplorable: And indeed their Sin ſeems to come neareſt to that againſt the Holy Ghoſt of any we are now capable of committing. But I leave them in the Hands of God, and recommend them to his Mercy——

June—— I lately heard of the Death of pious Mr.—— He was a Perſon of many and great Excellencies. I deſire to be ſenſible of the Loſs I, and indeed the Church of God has ſuſtained by his Removal. Among many other Things in him, exceeding worthy of Imitation, I would never forget theſe two. I obſerv'd that in publick Prayer he generally kept his Handkerchief cloſe upon his Face all the time; which ſerved both to cover it, and dry up his Tears, which I have Reaſon to think were not uncommon in his Devotion. And how ſerious and ſolemn an Air appear'd in his Countenance afterwards? He did not ſleep away the Prayer, nor ſuffer his Eyes to wander about thro' the Congregation. An uſeful Admonition this, which it concerns me to attend to. Another Thing in my Friend well worthy of my Remembrance, was his Practice of keeping a ſecret monthly Faſt,

in which he was conſtant and ſerious, and which I have Reaſon to ſuppoſe was intended by him, not ſo much to keep under the Body, and ſubdue exorbitant Deſires, Luſts and Paſſions, (on which Account, it may be, he had leſs Occaſion than many others for ſuch a Diſcipline) as to improve his Devotion, and wind up his Heart and Affections as near Heaven as he could. A Faſt-Day, with him, was a Day of Eminent Communion with God; not merely, or chiefly a Day of Humiliation and Tears, but, as I apprehend his Caſe to have been, at leaſt ſometimes, a Day of ſpiritual Joy and Triumph. Happy Souls, who are often thus employ'd; *in whoſe Heart are the Ways of God!* May I not only admire, but imitate ſuch Excellencies; and by ſuch vigorous Efforts and Eſſays in the divine Life, get more above the World, the Body, and animal Life, and foretaſte the Life to come.

I lately light upon the Life of *Monſ. de Fenelon*, Archbiſhop of *Cambray*: Several Things I find in it which, methinks, ſhew a Chriſtian Grandeur and Elevation of Mind above what is common. I was ſurpriz'd, I confeſs, to find ſuch a Man ſo wofully enſlaved to Church Power and Authority, as to ſacrifice his Reaſon and Underſtanding to the Dictates of the Pope. But how hard is it to throw off inveterate Prejudices, and the Principles of Education? In the mean time there ſeems an Ingenuity and Honeſty even in this Part of his Conduct, that gives an honourable Idea of the Perſon, Allowance being made for his Pre-poſſeſſion, and the Notions he was bred up in. As they believe the Infallibility of the Church and Pope, they muſt, in Conſequence, believe the Deciſions that come from thence are ſacred and divine; accordingly, a full Submiſſion is due. This Senſe he himſelf had

of the Matter. " My Submiſſion, ſaith he*, was * P. 124.
" not a Stroke of Policy, nor a Silence in reſpect
" to Men, but an inferior act of Obedience paid
" to God alone. According to catholick Princi-
" ples, I look'd upon the Judgment of my Su-
" periors as an Echo of the ſupreme Will. I did
" not ſtop to conſider the Prejudices and the Diſ-
" putes which preceded my Condemnation. I
" heard God ſpeaking as to *Job*, out of the midſt
" of the Whirlwind, and ſay to me, *Who is this*
" *that darkeneth Counſel by Words without Knowledge?*
" and I anſwer'd him from the Bottom of my
" Heart; *ſince I have ſpoken unadviſedly, what can*
" *I anſwer? I will lay my Hand upon my Mouth.*"
And again, " † I would rather die, than directly † P. 158.
" or indirectly defend a Book which I have con-
" demned without Reſtriction, in the Sincerity of
" my Heart, from a Principle of Docility and
" Submiſſion to the Holy See." And may not this Inſtance of abſolute Reſignation to the *pretended* Head of the Church, admoniſh me concerning my Duty to the *true Head?* There was no Prejudice or Paſſion in his Deciſions; his Doctrines, Rules, Laws, Cenſures, are all pure, divine, without Mixture of Error and Infirmity: I know God has ſpoke by the Lord Jeſus; as for this Man (the Pope) I know not whence he is. Oh! for a true Docility to my Great Lord and Maſter! May I bow my Underſtanding to his Authority. I may, and ſhould uſe it to find out the Meaning of his Doctrines and Laws, but muſt not ſet it up in Oppoſition thereto. If my great Maſter has ſaid it, has taught it, or commanded it, 'tis enough; I would lay aſide all Cavils, reſign, ſubmit, obey entirely and without Reſerve.

How many fine Strokes of Piety and Devotion do I here meet with, among ſome that I can't ſo

well underſtand nor digeſt? I would particularly remark what occurs* 293, 294. I am ſenſible I may borrow Hints from thence very much to my Advantage; and I would be the more concern'd to do ſo, in regard they are ſo ſuitable to my Caſe, and proper to afford me Relief under my preſent Infirmity. Oh! may I be always open to Conviction, and to Reproof; be ready to receive the Precepts of Wiſdom and Virtue wherever I meet with them. Lord, be my Inſtructor; and may the Inſpiration of the Almighty give me Underſtanding.

Thus may the Chriſtian employ himſelf in a Sort of *Extempore Meditation*, upon any Subject he pleaſeth, and that Providence lays before him. The Advantages of ſuch a Method of Devotion are not few, nor ſmall. But I had rather the reader would try the Courſe preſcribed, and prove by his own Experience what they are, than receive the Account from any Repreſentation I can make of them. And indeed I have ſpent ſo much Time upon this Head already, that I muſt not farther enlarge.

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* I have inſerted the Paſſages in theſe Pages before, and mention them here as proper to be brought into this Kind of *Extempore* Meditation. Any thing we meet with in Books, in Sermons, in Converſation, that is inſtructive, may afford a fit Subject for a Meditation; And I reckon it would be well worth while for ſuch Perſons, as are intent upon Improvement in Religion, to converſe with the Lives of eminent Men, and to collect out of them their ſeveral Excellencies, and all ſuch Inſtances of more ſublime Virtue, Piety and Devotion, as occur there. Theſe they would do well to take down in Writing, often conſult, and make uſe of in Meditation; to incite to which was one Reaſon of my mentioning the Lives in the Examples above.

SECT.

Sect. XI.

Of Self-Examination; which is conſider'd more at large, and as Part of the daily Exerciſe of a Chriſtian, in his Oratory or Cloſet, with Motives and Directions.

3dly, ANother Part of our Work and Employment in the Oratory is *Self-Examination*; which I am now to give an Account of. I have drawn out the Diſcourſe on the two former Heads, eſpecially on Meditation, to ſo great a Length, that I muſt be forced to contract what remains, and reduce it within as narrow Limits as I can, ſo as to avoid Obſcurity. Some Readers will more readily excuſe me, when they conſider that the Subject now before me, and that of Prayer, which is to follow, not only find a Place in almoſt every Book of Devotion, but almoſt fill it; whilſt the other Particulars, eſpecially Meditation, are but rarely touch'd, and I think not at all, in the Method I have purſued; ſo that I am ready to hope this will be ſome Apology, both for my Prolixity in the one, and Brevity in the other. And if any ſhall complain of a Defect in this Part of the Diſcourſe, (on the Head of Examination) perhaps I may afterwards ſupply it, if I ſhall have an Opportunity of performing what was propoſed, but muſt at preſent be omitted, *viz.* an Account of the *extraordinary* Duties of the Cloſet; as on Days of Faſting and Thankſgiving. When I ſhall endeavour

ſome Help to the ſerious Chriſtian, how to form and keep his Diary, and how to make Uſe of it in his daily Courſe; and eſpecially on the Occaſions mention'd, *Days of ſolemn Thanksgiving and Faſting.* On theſe Occaſions a more cloſe Examination of ourſelves is neceſſary; and therefore hither I refer the fuller Diſcuſſion of the Point. And that the Chriſtian may proceed with more Clearneſs and Eaſe in his Work (examining Heart and Life) I propoſe, if God pleaſe to favour the Deſign, a Scheme of Chriſtian Virtues, Graces and Duties, as laid down in the Bible; collecting ſuch Texts as concern the Government and due Ordering of our Thoughts, Deſires, Affections, Paſſions and Actions, with the Sins and Vices contrary thereto. The *Scripture is profitable for Correction,* 2 Tim. iii. 26. 'Tis a compleat Rule of holy Living; it gives Laws to the whole Man, and points out all our moral Errors and Miſtakes. We *cleanſe* our *Way by taking Heed thereto according to the Word,* Pſal. cxix. 9. And I reckon it would be of eminent Service towards our *Correction* and Reforming, and contribute not a little to render Examination more ſucceſsful, to have the Particulars of the divine Rule brought under proper Heads, and ſet before us in an ordinary *Paradigm,* or Scheme. Here we may behold ourſelves as in a Glaſs, ſoon diſcover our Deviations, Blemiſhes and Defects, and know what Manner of Perſons we are: But this, and the Examination it ſubſerves, muſt remain to ſome farther Opportunity. In the mean time, as Examination muſt be eſteem'd Part of *the ſtated and ordinary* Duties of the *Oratory,* I ſhall not quite paſs it over, though I diſpatch it in ſhort, and more ſuperficially.

And that I may proceed as diſtinctly as I can, I ſhall reduce what I have to ſay to the following Particulars.

Particulars. (1ſt,) Examination ſuppoſes a Rule according to which we are to try ourſelves, our State, Life and Actions. To examine is *ad examen revocare*, to bring to the Standard or Rule: This is the Import of the *Engliſh* Word; and much the ſame Senſe has the *Greek* Word, which we tranſlate *examine* in the New Teſtament, δοκιμαζειν. It notes ſuch a Trial of a Thing as Goldſmiths make of Metals by the Touchſtone: That which can bear the Touch is upright, pure, good and approved, δόκιμον; which cannot, as being adulterated, or counterfeit, is reprobate and diſapproved, ἀδόκιμον. The Examination of ourſelves ſuppoſes an authentick Standard to which we are to apply, and by which we are to judge of ourſelves: *And this is the Holy Scripture*; which, as 'tis *given by Inſpiration of God, and is profitable for Doctrine*, teaching us what to believe; *for Reproof*, pointing out Errors, and ſetting a Mark on dangerous Principles; for *Correction* of Manners, of Heart, Frame and Life; and for *Inſtruction in Righteouſneſs*, directing us in all our Duties towards God and Man: So 'tis able to make *the Man of God perfect, throughly furniſhed unto every good Work*, 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. 'Tis a compleat Rule, without any Defect, every Way ſufficient for all the Purpoſes it's deſign'd to ſerve. It deſcribes the Chriſtian, lays down the eſſential diſtinguiſhing Marks, by which he may be known; directs him in all his Duties, conducts him in his whole Courſe and Walk; *is a Lamp unto his Feet, and a Light unto his Path*, Pſal. cxix. 105. This is the Rule by which we are to judge of ourſelves; he's a Chriſtian that has the Heart, Temper, Frame, and Walk here requir'd; he that wants theſe is ἀδόκιμος, reprobate and diſapproved; not that an abſolute Conformity is expected: The beſt have ſomething *lacking in* their *Faith*, that needs to

be perfected, 1 *Theſſ.* iii. 10. Something lacking in their Hope, Love, and every Grace, many and great Defects in their Obedience: And our Comfort is, that the Goſpel has its Grains of Allowance, doth not weigh us rigorouſly, but accepts of Sincerity. True, though imperfect Grace; upright, though defective Obedience, will paſs in the Chancery of the Goſpel, as I may call it: So that though the Law of God is our Rule, our only Rule, to which we muſt have Recourſe in our Examination, yet we are to conſider it in the Goſpel Form, with ſuch Abatements and Mitigations as are ſuitable to our State. *If thou, Lord, ſhould'ſt mark Iniquity, who could ſtand? But there is Forgiveneſs with thee, that thou mayeſt be feared.* Neither our Habits nor Acts of Grace and Obedience come up to the full Demands of the Rule; but if we have them in Truth and Reality, we may ſtand the Teſt, notwithſtanding our Deſerts, and ſhall be *accepted in the Beloved.*

2dly, There is an Examination that refers to our State in general; the great Deſigns of which is the Diſcovery of our ſpiritual Condition, whether we be true and ſincere Chriſtians or not. Concerning which let me obſerve, *that we may know our State. Examine yourſelves*, ſaith the *Apoſtle*, *whether you be in the Faith; prove your own ſelves; know ye not your own ſelves, how that Chriſt is in you, except ye be reprobate?* 2 Cor. xiii. 5. Every Chriſtian ought to try himſelf, and may know himſelf if he be faithful in examining. The frequent Exhortations of Scripture hereunto imply both theſe, *viz.* That the Knowledge of our ſelves is attainable, and that we ſhould endeavour after it. Why ſhould the *Apoſtle* put them upon examining and proving themſelves, unleſs it was poſſible to know themſelves upon ſuch Trying and Proving? So, 2 Pet. i. 10. *Give all Diligence to make*

your Calling and Election ſure. He can't refer to an *external* Calling, or outward Profeſſion of the Goſpel, that they were ſure of already, but muſt, I preſume, refer to an internal Call; as if he had ſaid, *Endeavour for a ſatisfactory Evidence of it, that you are Chriſtians, choſen and approved of God.* This they were to make ſure, *ſure to themſelves;* conſequently 'tis what they might do. They might be ſure of their Calling, and of their good State, or ſuch Exhortations as theſe, how ſolemn and ſerious ſoever they ſeem, muſt be vain, and to no Purpoſe. I add, ſeveral have actually attain'd the Knowledge of themſelves, and a Certainty of their Calling. *We know,* ſaith the *Apoſtle, that we have paſſed from Death to Life,* 1 John iii. 14. And with how much Confidence doth St. *Paul* ſpeak of his own future Happineſs, 2 *Cor.* v. 1, 2, *&c.* And more directly, 2 *Tim.* iv. 7, 8. *I have fought a good Fight—— Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteouſneſs.* And again, *Phil.* i. 21, 23.

Nor do I apprehend the Knowledge of our State, (call it Aſſurance if you pleaſe) ſo uncommon and extraordinary a Thing as ſome are apt to imagine; underſtand, by Aſſurance, a ſatisfactory Evidence of the Thing, ſuch as excludes all reaſonable Doubts, and diſquieting Fears of the contrary, though, it may be, not all tranſient Suſpicions and Jealouſies. And ſuch an Aſſurance and Certainty Multitudes have attain'd, and enjoy the Comfort of: And indeed 'tis of ſo high Importance, that 'tis a Wonder any thoughtful Chriſtian, that believes an Eternity, can be eaſy one Week or Day without it. And therefore, though this be not the Examination I am more immediately concern'd with in this Diſcourſe, I can't but earneſtly recommend it to the Care of the Reader. We ſhould examine and try ourſelves; do it over and over again;

gain; repeat and purſue the Enquiry, and not ceaſe 'till we come to ſome Clearneſs with Reference to our everlaſting State; and are able to ſay upon good Grounds, *we know that we are paſſed from Death to Life.* If any ſhould ask how may this be known, I muſt refer them, for Satisfaction, to ſuch as treat profeſſedly of the Subject, it being beſides my Purpoſe at preſent; only let me hint two Things, *that we are to take the Evidence from the Scripture and our own Hearts compared together.* The one deſcribes the Chriſtian, the other reports him in this or that particular Inſtance: The former ſaith what he muſt be, and is, with reſpect to his Principles, Frame and Conduct; the other makes particular Application, reſumes, and ſaith, *I am ſuch a one*; or I have Reaſon to hope I am ſuch a one. This may be exemplified by going over any of the great Characters of Chriſtians, as given in Scripture. *He that believes ſhall be ſaved*, ſaith the Scripture; I believe, ſaith the Chriſtian. *He that loveth God, the ſame is known, or approved of him*, ſaith the Scripture; I love God, ſaith the Chriſtian. *If through the Spirit you mortify the Deeds of the Body, you ſhall live*, ſaith the Scripture: *They that are Chriſt's have crucified the Fleſh*, &c. *To them that by patient Continuance in well-doing, ſeek for Glory, Honour and Immortality, he'll render eternal Life*; this I do, ſaith the Chriſtian; and according to the Grounds he has for his Aſſertion, and the Evidence of this or that Grace and Qualification, ſo is his Certainty and Aſſurance. *That he who repenteth ſhall be pardon'd; that the pure in Heart ſhall ſee God; that he that cometh to Chriſt he will in no wiſe caſt out*; with the other Particulars cited, and many more that might be added, are the expreſs Declarations of Scripture; that I am ſuch a one as theſe Texts import and require I

ſhould

ſhould be, is the Thing I am concern'd to enquire into: If I have Reaſon to think I am, and am not miſtaken, the Concluſion concerning my preſent good State and future Happineſs is undeniable, and is a natural Conſequence from the Premiſſes. *He that believes, repents,* loves God above the World, that is a new Creature, and lives a Life of Holineſs and Obedience, *ſhall be ſaved*; but this do I, therefore I ſhall be ſaved. I can't be miſtaken as to the firſt Propoſition, it depending on the Authority of God's Word; and if I have Clearneſs in the ſecond Propoſition; if upon comparing myſelf with the Rule, I find an Agreement, the Concluſion is undeniable: And the Evidence of this Matter, the knowing ourſelves, and diſcerning our Conformity to our Rule, is the great Buſineſs and End of our Examination.

Another Thing I would hint is, *that the Knowledge of our* State, ſuch ſolid ſatisfactory Evidence, as the Chriſtian may reſt in, is the Fruit, ordinarily, at leaſt, of much Experience; 'tis not to be attain'd ſoon, upon a ſingle Enquiry, but is the Reſult of many Enquiries: We are to view ourſelves *often* in the Glaſs of the World; compare ourſelves with it at different Times, and in all the Varieties of our Poſtures and Frames. One while, it may be, we look pretty much like Chriſtians; as when Grace is in more lively Exerciſe, Corruptions are ſtill, and appear mortified: At another time Things look more diſcouraging, and with a worſe Face; ſo that former Hopes are daſh'd, and we begin to call all in Queſtion again. Sometimes the grand Criterion and Mark of a Chriſtian, *the Preference of the other World, and the Concernments of it, to all the Enjoyments of this,* is ſcarce diſcernible. At another and better Seaſon we are ready to ſay, with a Sort of Triumph, *Whom have I in Heaven but*

but thee? None of theſe Things move me, neither count I my Life dear, ſo I may finiſh my Courſe with Joy. The Things of this World appear ſo minute, contemptible, and nothing, *mere Droſs and Dung*, compar'd with the high and important Affairs of Eternity, that we eſteem them ſcarce worthy of a ſerious, ſollicitous Thought; and when this becomes our habitual Temper, the Evidence of our Sincerity will be more clear and ſtrong. In ſhort, the Chriſtian will not ordinarily know himſelf, till he has been a conſiderable while exerciſed in his Warfare, and has view'd himſelf from ſeveral Diſtances, as I may expreſs it: He muſt compare himſelf with his Rule, not only once or twice, but often, in all the various Shapes in which he appears; and from his Proficiency and Progreſs in Religion, and growing Conformity to his Rule, at laſt form the Judgment.

What Hand the Spirit of God has in this Work, aſſiſting us in the Knowledge of ourſelves, and in order to an Aſſurance concerning our good State, I am not now to enquire. 'Tis certain, he indited and formed the Rule by which we muſt examine: He's the Author of thoſe gracious Habits and Acts, in which our Conformity to the Rule conſiſts: He helps us in the Exerciſe of Grace: He ſometimes, no doubt, ſhines in upon the Mind, enlightens, and, as it were, comments upon his own Work, makes it diſcern'd and underſtood: He may ſometimes aſſiſt in making the Concluſion; embolden the Chriſtian to determine in Favour of himſelf, which his great Modeſty, Humility, and Timorouſneſs made him ſhy of doing. Nor will I deny but he may ſometimes, *in an immediate authoritative Manner*, interpoſe and decide the Queſtion, that has long been depending in the Mind, in Favour of the Believer. I aſſert nothing here, neither

neither will I deny this is ever the Caſe. His more ordinary Method is to *witneſs with our Spirit, that we are the Children of God*, Rom. viii. 16. But he may poſſibly, *on ſpecial Occaſions*, that require it, witneſs *to* them, without much of their Concurrence in the Work: As when the poor melancholy Chriſtian, that dare ſcarce entertain a good Thought of himſelf, or any Thing he doth, has been long poring upon himſelf, and is ſtill bewilder'd, involved in Darkneſs and Fears, the divine Spirit may, at ſuch a time, through a ſpecial Diſpenſation of Grace and Favour, come in to his Aſſiſtance; ſpeak Peace, pronounce and make a Deciſion in his Favour. But this we are not to promiſe ourſelves nor expect; but wait for Evidence in the ordinary Way. And I perſuade myſelf, all ſenſible Chriſtians will take this for a Matter of too much Moment, not to deſerve their ſerious Attention; and tho' it is not the particular Examination I am now chiefly to recommend; 'tis however ſuppoſed to it, and ought to have a Place among the Duties of the *Oratory*. We ſhould take proper Times to ſettle this great Point, and not reſt ſatisfied till it be ſettled: We ſhould often ask ourſelves upon what Foundation we ſtand in Religion, and for another World; whether we don't delude ourſelves with preſumptuous Hopes, carry a Lie in our right Hand; whether we don't build our *Houſe upon the Sand*, which will fall at laſt, *and great*, and dreadful in its Conſequences, will be *the fall* thereof, *Matt.* vii. 26, 27. Oh! let us be in good Earneſt in this Matter; ſearch and try ourſelves, and beg that God would ſearch us, and help us in ſearching; *and if there be any wicked Way in* us, *lead* us *the Way everlaſting*, Pſal. cxxxix. 23, 24. That we may not think ourſelves *to be ſomething when* we are *nothing*, deceiving ourſelves, *Gal.* vi. 3. To prevent which, let

let every Man, as it follows in the next Verſe, prove his own Work, and then ſhall he have Rejoicing in himſelf alone, and not in another. One Caution it may be proper to ſubjoin, becauſe a Miſtake here often proves an Occaſion of Diſcouragement to ſome, *viz.* That we ſhould not look too high, and becauſe we can't find ourſelves among the beſt and greateſt Chriſtians, therefore conclude we are not Chriſtians. The Thing to be enquir'd into, and that we have to prove, is the Truth of Grace, and not the Degrees of it. The great Queſtion, in the Examination I am here ſpeaking of, is not whether we have an Alloy, a Mixture of Imperfection, for what we have and ſhall have whilſt in this World, but whether we be Standard; whether we be reprobate Silver, as is ſaid of them, *Jer.* vi. 30. falſe counterfeit Metal, or whether when tried we come forth as Gold, *Job* xxiii. 10. If we be upright before God, have Truth in the inward Parts, God will accept us notwithſtanding Infirmities, and therefore we ſhould not reject nor condemn ourſelves.

(3) The Chriſtian having examin'd and prov'd himſelf, ſo far as to come to ſome Clearneſs concerning his own good State, 'tis not neceſſary (it would indeed be impertinent) to be daily repeating the Examination; what need a Man enquire after what he knows, or ſearch what he has already found? One can't imagine that the Apoſtle *Paul* who had been in the third Heaven, and knew there was laid up for him a Crown of Life, that ſo earneſtly deſir'd *to depart and be with Chriſt*, had any occaſion to examine whether he was a Chriſtian or not. And tho' it may be allow'd he far exceeded common Chriſtians, both for the Eminency and Evidence of his Grace, yet 'tis certain his Privilege was not ſingular. Others may know themſelves

ſelves, many do know themſelves, as has been hinted; and when this is the Caſe of any, it can't be their Duty to be every now and then calling their State in queſtion. Indeed upon any Relapſe and Declining, upon Loſs of former Strength, Light and Comfort, it may be proper to reviſe the Account, call Things over again; not only do the firſt Works, repent and reform, but alſo re-examine the State; take occaſion to inquire, whether there be no Miſtake, renew the Watch and Reſolution, beg a freſh Unction from Heaven, endeavour to get all ſuſpicions removed, and the Soul eſtabliſh'd in the Way of Truth and Peace: Nor will it be improper ſometimes to examine, after we have attain'd a comfortable Evidence of our Sincerity, in order to confirm the Evidence, and improve it into a fuller Aſſurance: The Judgment we make of our ſelves is not authoritative, much leſs final; *he that judges us is the Lord*, and we muſt not think 'tis ſo ſufficient, that it may not be reverſed, much leſs that it need not be review'd: In ſhort, ſome, I hope many, Chriſtians have ſolid Peace upon ſolid Grounds, and clear Evidence, and theſe need not examining, like thoſe that are utterly in the dark, tho' they may have occaſion to look back and reviſe their Work.

(4) Beſides the Examination that reſpects our general State, there is a Review of ourſelves, and Actions, which is our daily conſtant Duty; and this is the *Examination* the preſent Diſcourſe is chiefly concern'd with, which ought to be made Part of the ſtated Work of the Cloſet or *Oratory*. It may be call'd Examination, as 'tis a Comparing ourſelves with our Rule, bringing the Actions (at Night we will ſuppoſe, a proper Time for this Service) of the Day to the Teſt, the Rule of God's Word, enquiring how far they agree hitherto. We

are

are to *commune with our own Hearts upon our Bed* (or in our Chamber, as the Word may ſignify) *Pſal.* iv. 4. We are to converſe with ourſelves, ſpeak to our Hearts in our Chamber, Oratory, or Place of Retirement, and among other Things we ſhould commune with our Hearts about; one is, *what has paſſed in the Day*, what has been our Conduct and Behaviour in it and thorough it, looking over the Occurrences and Tranſactions thereof. A Practice that has been recommended by ſome of the heathen Moraliſts of the greateſt Name, as *Plutarch*, *Epictetus*, *Marcus Antonius*, and others; particularly by *Pythagoras*, in the Verſes that go under his Name, and are called his Golden Verſes. He adviſes his Scholars every Night to recollect the Paſſages of the Day, and ask themſelves theſe Queſtions, πῆ παρέβην, &c. *Wherein have I tranſgreſſed? What have I done? What Duty have I omitted?* Upon which *Hierocles* thus comments: This Courſe, if duly obſerv'd, prefers the divine Image in them that uſe it, leading them to Virtue, and all attainable Excellency, and it ſeems ſome of them practiſed according to theſe Rules, as *Seneca* tells us. Having ſuggeſted that the way to govern the Senſes and Paſſions, is to call the Mind daily to account, he adds, " *Faciebat hoc Sextius*, &c. *Sextius* did this " at the Cloſe of the Day, addreſſing himſelf to " his own Conſcience in the following Manner: " What Evil of thine haſt thou heal'd to day? " What Vice haſt thou withſtood? In what re- " ſpect art thou better? Anger will ceaſe and be- " come more mild, when it expects daily to be " brought before the Judge. Nothing more ad- " vantageous than this conſtant Cuſtom of ſearch- " ing through the Day. How compoſedly and " freely ſhall we ſleep after ſuch a Trial (Peace " being made with God and Conſcience might " have

Seneca de ira, lib. 3. *cap.* 36.

" have been added) when the Soul is either ad-
" moniſh'd or commended, and the ſecret Cenſor
" has taken Cogniſance of our Manners. He goes
on, " I daily take this Courſe myſelf, plead my
" Cauſe, and ſit in Judgment with myſelf; and
" at night when the Light is taken away, and all
" is huſh and ſtill, I make a Scrutiny into the
" Day, look over my Words and Actions, and
" hide nothing from myſelf: In ſuch a Contro-
" verſy and Debate thou waſt over keen; ſuch a
" one thou admoniſhedſt over freely (*vide ne am-
" plius iſtud facias*): Be upon thy Guard for the
" future——" How noble an Example this? How inexcuſable ſhall we Chriſtians be, if we be found leſs circumſpect, critical and exact in our Conduct than theſe Pagans, conſidering how much ſtronger Motives to Religion, and how many greater helps in it we have?

The Advantages of ſuch a Courſe are not a few, particularly, hereby we may attain to, and preſerve a diſtinct clear Knowledge of ourſelves, of our preſent State and Circumſtances; what we are, what we want, what our Deſerts and Infirmities, what the Spots of our Garments, and Blemiſhes of our Minds. He that is daily beholding his Face in the Glaſs of God's Word, will not eaſily miſtake himſelf, nor forget what manner of Man he is.

Hereby we ſhall be directed to the proper Work and ſpecial Duty that lies before us; when we know our Caſe, we ſhall better know what we have to do, and be upon ſuch Endeavours as are moſt pertinent, and *therefore* moſt uſeful. Examination is in order to Correction and Amendment. We abuſe it and ourſelves, if we reſt in the Duty, without looking farther: We are to review our daily Walk; that we may reform it, and conſequently a daily Review will point out to us the

Subject and Matter of our future daily Care, This Day, ſaith the Chriſtian (upon his Review of Things at night) I loſt ſo much Time, particularly at—— I took too great a Liberty, particularly in—— I omitted ſuch an Opportunity that might have been improv'd to better Purpoſe. I miſmanaged ſuch a Duty——I find ſuch a Corruption often working; my old Infirmity—— ſtill cleaves to me; how eaſily doth this Sin beſet me. Oh! may I be more attentive for time to come; more watchful over my Heart, take more heed to my Ways! May I do ſo the next Day! The Knowledge of a Diſtemper is a good Step to a Cure, at leaſt it directs to proper Methods and Applications in order to it: Self-acquaintance leads to Self-reformation: he that at the cloſe of each Day calls over what has paſs'd, inſpects himſelf, his behaviour and Manners, will not fall into that Security, and thoſe uncenſur'd Follies that are ſo common and ſo dangerous. This frequent View of himſelf, unleſs Conſcience be ſtupid and ſeared (in which Caſe nothing of this nature can be expected), will point out his Duty as a Penitent and Phyſician, and excite to it.

And then 'tis evident ſuch a Courſe will enliven, conduct and many ways aſſiſt preſent Devotion; will furniſh for it and help in the Performance, ſuggeſt Matter for Confeſſion, Petition, or Thankſgiving, as there is occaſion; will make thoſe Services more pertinent, and in conſquence thereof more beneficial. Hereby we ſhall better underſtand what eſpecially to inſiſt upon in our Addreſſes to God; what to pray, wait and endeavour for.

It will be an excellent Remedy and Preſervative againſt Sin, and contribute not a little to promote the Circumſpection and Accuracy of Life and Converſation we ſhould conſtantly aim at.

What

What a good Man ſaith of Prayer, *that praying will make one give over ſinning, or ſinning make one give over praying*, may be applied here. 'Tis ſcarce poſſible to purſue the Method I am recommending, and at the ſame Time live looſely and without Caution. How ſhall I anſwer to myſelf at Night? Such a Queſtion will be a Check to many Follies and Indecencies in the Day. Conſcience will be more tender and watchful, when it knows it muſt paſs through a ſpeedy Examination, and be afraid of any Liberties, for which it expects immediate Cenſure and Reproach. Learn, Chriſtian, this way of communing with thy own Heart, of carrying on a judicial Proceſs there; ſet up daily a Tribunal in thy Heart, and it will have an happy Influence upon thy Life.

I might inlarge on many more Particulars, but ſhall only add one farther, as a ſpecial Advantage of ſuch a Courſe, that as it tends to make Life more innocent and fruitful, ſo to make Death more ſafe and comfortable. Did we accuſtom ourſelves to reviſe Matters, and ſettle Accounts every Day, we ſhould have leſs to do at the laſt: We ſhould have the Account, as it were, ſumm'd up and ſtated at the Bottom of every Page, and conſequently ſhall be leſs involv'd and perplex'd, than if we had the whole Volume of Life then to look over; which indeed would be a vain Attempt, unleſs this frequent poſting and adjuſting of Accounts prepare the Matter for a more eaſy Diſpatch. But when the Chriſtian has kept his Books, the Records of Conſcience, with competent Exactneſs and Care; has had frequent Reckonings, not only yearly and monthly, but, in ſome Meaſure, *daily*; his Buſineſs at laſt will be reduc'd to a narrow Compaſs, and he will have little to do, but to make a general Review, with ſuch Recollections

and Devotions as become a dying Saint, compounded of penitential Abaſements, and rejoicing Hopes, dropping his Tears over the Infirmities he is conſcious of, and triumphing in the Proſpect of his Crown, being ready in the mean Time to caſt it down before the Throne, ſaying, *Lord, thou art worthy.* Bleſſed State! which the Courſe I am adviſing to, will probably terminate in. Indeed Comfort in a dying Hour will, I preſume, very much depend upon the ſenſible Preſence of God then vouchſafed; and who ſo like to obtain the Favour and Privilege, as Perſons engaged in the Work I am ſpeaking of? However if they have leſs Comfort, they will have Safety; their latter End ſhall be Peace.

Reader, if yet thou knoweſt nothing of this Practice, of the Method propos'd, neglect it no longer; daily call thyſelf to the Bar of thy own Conſcience. Object not Difficulties; nothing excellent can be attain'd without ſome Difficulty: A little Uſe will make it familiar and eaſy, and the Pleaſure and Profit of it will abundantly compenſate for all the Pains. This is to live for thy Soul and Eternity; and is no Care, Diligence and Self-denial due in a Matter of ſuch Moment? A Book of Accounts for an ordinary Trade, can't be kept without ſome Attention and Application, more than might ſuffice in the preſent Caſe; and ſhall we ſo readily ſubmit to take Pains even to Drudgery, for the Advantage and Accommodation of the Body, and reject all ſuitable Endeavours, Care and Thought for ſecuring our higheſt and everlaſting Intereſt, that of the immortal Soul? Oh how ſhall we upbraid ourſelves in Hell, I might ſay be aſham'd of ourſelves even in Heaven, when we reflect upon our Negligence and Remiſſneſs, by which we ſuffer ſo great a Diminution of our

Happineſs. It will, no Queſtion, accent and inflame the Torments of the Damned, to think a Part, a ſmall Part of the Labour and Time thrown away in Purſuit of the Pleaſures and Profits of the World, might with the Bleſſing of God have ſecur'd their Salvation; and though there will be no Room for ſuch Reflections in Heaven, as would diſturb their Happineſs, yet a Reflection on their eager Purſuits of Vanity and Impertinence, and their Coolneſs and Indifferency in the moſt momentous Affairs, and what they knew to be ſuch and own'd to be ſuch, may be abaſing and humbling; hereby their Heaven is leſſen'd, and conſequently their Joy. *Their Works follow the Bleſſed that die in the Lord,* Rev. xiv. 13. but where there are no ſuch Works, 'tis certain they cannot follow them. Oh! let us be as wiſe for our Souls, as others are for their Bodies; be as diligent for another World and for Eternity, as others are for this World, and we ſhan't neglect a Courſe ſo well calculated to promote our beſt Intereſt and Happineſs.

Some Directions I ſhall ſubjoin for the Uſe of thoſe that are diſpos'd to the Duty preſcrib'd, this Method of daily Examination. (1) Acquaint yourſelves well with your Rule, by which you are to examine; and the more diſtinct and exact your Knowledge is in this Matter, the better you are prepar'd for the Duty before us. I need not repeat, that the Word of God is our Rule, with this we ſhould endeavour to acquaint ourſelves. But as it can't be expected every Chriſtian ſhould have all the Particulars of it, that refer to this Matter, in his Mind and in Readineſs, as often as he has Occaſion to compare himſelf therewith, it would be well to be ſupply'd with an Abſtract, a Scheme of ſacred Rules relating to every Part of

our Duty. The Jews reduc'd their Law to 613 Precepts; I don't doubt but there is a Spice of their uſual Superſtition in this Diviſion: 'Tis however unqueſtionable, that the entire Bible will afford us leſs Help in our Examination, than when 'tis divided in the Manner propos'd; we need not be ſollicitous about the Number of its Precepts, but ſhould be careful to bring them under proper Heads: Theſe ſhould be treaſur'd up in the Mind (it may not be amiſs to write them down in order thereto, and well digeſted, as ſo many Principles by which we are to govern and examine ourſelves. They make what is call'd the *Synteriſis*, the Rule of Conſcience, by which it directs our Actions, and judges thereof.

(2) Be as particular and full in the Examination as you can; try yourſelves on every Head of Religion, and Rule of ſacred Practice. The Method of doing this may be according to your Scheme or Draught, if you have one; or according to the Order of Time in the Proceſs of the Day; as thus, What was my Care in the Morning? Did I obſerve Rule then, endeavouring when I awaked to be ſtill with GOD? Did I conſecrate my firſt Thoughts to him? How was the reſt of the Day employ'd? I would look over the ſeveral Hours of it.——Or you may proceed according to the Buſineſs of the Day, religious Buſineſs; as thus, Did I not neglect the Duties of the Cloſet? How have I perform'd them? Where you will find Room for ſeveral Enquiries. How did I diſcharge the Duties of Family-religion? And ſo with Reference to common Buſineſs. The Management of your particular Callings, your Converſe, Diverſions, *&c.* The Affairs and Occurrences of the Day may be brought under theſe Heads, and an Examination pertinently

ly carried on upon them: Or we may examine by our ſeveral Faculties and Powers; as our Thoughts, Deſires, Affections, Paſſions, Tongue, Appetite and Senſes, asking ourſelves how all theſe have been employ'd and govern'd; what have been the Sins of them. Or laſtly, the ſame Deſign will be anſwer'd if we proceed in the Examination upon the three great Branches of our Duty, towards God, our Neighbour and ourſelves. 'Tis good to obſerve ſome Method, both to prevent Rambling and Impertinence, and that nothing material may be overlook'd, though no one particular Method is neceſſary. Let every one take his Choice here, only ſee that the Work be thoroughly done, and the Enquiry extended thro' all our Duties and Obligations.

(3) Don't neglect a *tranſient Review* when you can do no more; even what I intend by the former, may be diſpatch'd in a little time, in half a quarter of an Hour, and ſometimes leſs (tho' often we may allow more to it;) and when the Chriſtian is ſtraiten'd with reſpect to Time, or any way render'd leſs capable of ſuch Work, a *tranſient Review* of the Day may be all he can pretend to, and it may be ſufficient.

(4) Don't examine merely to cenſure, but to approve as there is Occaſion. Take Notice of what is good as well as what is amiſs, that you may praiſe, tho' not ſo much yourſelves, as the Grace of God *that is with you.* We ſhould not place Religion in complaining, nor delight too much in that Strain: We ought to be thankful for the Good we do, or get any Day: No queſtion we may take the Comfort of our own good Deſigns, Endeavours, Works, Succeſs, *&c.* and ſhould do ſo when there is Reaſon for it, provided we acknowledge with ſuitable Gratitude the Hand that has ſupply'd and aſſiſted

us. 'Tis not any Part of Humility to overlook the Grace of God, or reject the Comfort that belongs to us. We ſhould examine not only to diſcover what is wrong, but what is right, that we may bewail the one, and rejoice in the other.

(5) It may be ſometimes proper to take down in writing any of the more remarkable Occurrences of the Day: If you have receiv'd any ſpecial Mercy; had ſpecial Help in any Duty and Work you were concern'd in, or been guilty of any great Omiſſion, Failing, *&c.* Note it down in your Paper, as thus: This Morning when I awaked, inſtead of fixing my Thoughts on God and divine Subjects, I ſuffer'd them to ramble, and to wander from one Impertinence to another, by which Means I became wofully indiſpos'd for the Duties before me, for my uſual Devotion. Indeed I pray'd, but it was in a poor broken heartleſs Manner.—— This Morning when I aroſe, inſtead of applying myſelf to God in Prayer, which I generally find beſt to do immediately (after a few ſerious Reflections) I gave Way to idle Muſing, to the great Diſorder of my Heart and Frame. How often have I ſuffer'd for want of more Watchfulneſs on this Occaſion? When ſhall I be wiſe!— I have this Day ſhamefully trifled, almoſt thro the whole of it: Was in my Bed when I ſhould have been on my Knees; pray'd but cooly in the Morning; was ſtrangely off my Guard in the Buſineſs and Converſation I was concern'd with in the Day, particularly at—— I indulged to very fooliſh ſinful vile Thoughts, *&c.* I fell in with a Strain of Converſation too common among all Sorts, *ſpeaking Evil of others*; taking up a Reproach againſt my Neighbour. I have often reſolv'd againſt this Sin, and yet run into it again. How treacherous this wicked Heart of mine! I have

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loſt ſeveral Hours this Day in mere ſauntring and Idleneſs—— This Day I had an Inſtance of my own Infirmity, that I was a little ſurpriz'd at, and I am ſure I ought to be humbled for. The Behaviour of—— from whom I can expect nothing but Humour, Indiſcretion and Folly, ſtrangely ruffled me, and that after I have had Warning over and over again. What a poor impotent and contemptible Creature am I! This Day I have been kept, in a great Meaſure, from my too frequent Failings—— I had this Day very comfortable Aſſiſtance from God, upon an Occaſion not a little trying—— What ſhall I render? And in this Manner the Chriſtian may proceed, upon the Review he makes of himſelf in his Oratory, varying his Cenſures as Occaſion requires, and ſuiting them to his different Circumſtances: And it may be, you will find it worth while to transfer ſome Minutes or Hints of this Kind into your Diary; I mean when any Thing has offer'd in the Day that calls for more than ordinary Notice.

6thly, Beſides ſtated Examination and Reviews of our Caſe at the Cloſe of each Day, there are Times that call for more ſpecial Examination; as *New-Year's* Day; every Lord's Day; a Sacrament Day, and a Faſt Day. On theſe Occaſions the Chriſtian is to make a more diligent Search, and take a greater Compaſs in his Examination; reviſe former leſs Accounts, compare his State at different Stages and Periods, that he may the better judge of himſelf, and apply to ſuch Work as the preſent Condition of his Affairs require. Such Specimens have been offer'd already under the Head of Examination, as are ſuitable to moſt of theſe Occaſions, and the Chriſtian that is diſpoſed to the Work will eaſily ſupply the reſt; and therefore I ſhall forbear exemplifying what I have recommended.

7thly, En-

7thly, Endeavour to get and keep Conſcience in ſuch a Plight, as that it may not fail nor deceive you in the Diſcharge of this Duty. A faithful, tender Conſcience is one of the greateſt Bleſſings in the World; it will make Life more regular, and the Review of it more eaſy. *David's Heart ſmote him,* when *he cut off Saul's Skirt,* 1 Sam. xxiv. 5. He was got upon a Precipice; approach'd too near a forbidden Life, and was running into Temptation; and for this his Heart ſmote him; it would not ſuffer him to proceed farther, nor doth it paſs what was done without a Rebuke. And this is the Property and great Happineſs of a faithful Conſcience; 'tis a Boſom Preacher, ſtands Centinel in the Soul, gives Warning of approaching Danger, checks us when we come near it, admoniſhes upon the Commiſſion of Sin, and is at once the Guard and Cenſor of Life. Study and pray for an upright, faithful Conſcience, and labour to preſerve it in a due State, that it may be fit for its Office; to which Purpoſe 'tis not only neceſſary that it be awaken'd, ſanctify'd, furniſh'd with Light from above; a competent Knowledge of Duty in all the Particulars thereof; but it muſt be kept awake and attentive. And when this is the Caſe, Conſcience will be ready upon Call, ready to produce its Records, and to confirm with its Suffrage and Voice every juſt Cenſure we paſs in the Examination of ourſelves. Whereas if Conſcience be neglected, corrupted in its Principles, or lulled aſleep, we ſhall make nothing of ſuch Work, ſhall neither have Inclination to it, nor Succeſs in it.

8thly, Endeavour ſo to manage this Work, the daily Review of yourſelves, your Life and Actions, that you may be encouraged to it, and to perſiſt in it by the Advantage and Comfort of it: A looſe, unguarded Life is but ſeldom review'd; and if upon

on the Review of it we don't correct it, we ſhall ſoon grow weary of reviewing. In ſhort, we ſhould live ſo that we may review our Courſe with Pleaſure; and ſo improve the daily Cenſure we have Occaſion to paſs, that we may ſtill find more and more Pleaſure in it. This will make Self-Examination delightful, and conſequently invite to it, will gradually refine the Heart and Frame, and carry us on towards Perfection.

9thly, Apply yourſelves to God ſuitably to the State of Things with you. Our firſt and immediate Work after Examination is with God, confeſſing what has been amiſs, acknowledging his Grace and Help in what has been well; begging Forgiveneſs, farther Conduct, Aſſiſtance, and the like. Nor is it the leaſt of the Advantages that will attend the conſcientious Diſcharge of this Duty; that it will indite our Prayers, and influence our Devotion. When we have ſearch'd ourſelves we ſhould apply to Heaven in a Manner becoming our Caſe.

10thly, Upon every Review and Cenſure of yourſelves, look up to the great Peace-maker the Lord Jeſus; *remember if any Man ſin we have an Advocate with the Father*, 1 John ii. 1. Plead the Blood of Atonement, and lay your Hand upon the Head of this great Victim: The Grace, Favour, and Help you have receiv'd muſt be placed to his Account; and 'tis through him only that your Humiliation and Repentance can be accepted. Whatever therefore you do, and that you find ſeaſonable and neceſſary to do, upon your Examination, *do all in the Name of the Lord Jeſus, giving Thanks* (and confeſſing) *unto God, and the Father by him*, Col. iii. 17.

And having mention'd theſe few Particulars by Way of Direction, which might have been much more

more enlarged upon, I leave them with the Reader. As for ſuch as may object againſt this Method, as ſavouring of Legaliſm, and being more ado than needs, pretending we are to believe, and not work, in order to Salvation, I have nothing to ſay to them in this Diſcourſe, which is calculated for Perſons of another Stamp. The more common Objections, I reckon, will be taken from the Difficulty of the Work, and are the Language of Sloth and carnal Security; but I have not Room to plead with ſuch at preſent from the Importance and Neceſſity of the Thing; the Pains they chearfully ſubmit to in Affairs of infinitely leſs Conſequence, *&c.* I would only deſire them to ask themſelves, whether their own Reaſon and Conſcience do not approve the Method preſcribed, as juſt, good, and profitable; whether they don't ſpend more Time to leſs Purpoſe every Day, than might be ſufficient for this Exerciſe; whether this Courſe of Religion (converſing with God and themſelves in the Way recommended) would not yield more Comfort in a dying Hour, than the Method of Life they are in, employing their Time in exceſſive, unneceſſary Care and Labour about the World, or paſſing their Evenings in Clubs at Taverns or Alehouſes, in Company, Diverſions, *&c.* Reader, lay theſe Queſtions before thy own Conſcience, and all I requeſt is, that thou wilt anſwer them in the Fear of God, and act according to the Conviction of thy own Mind.

SECT.

SECT. XII.

Of ſecret Prayer. Some Particulars explaining the Duty, and directing as to the Management of it. A Specimen of Prayer, repreſenting the Order and Method of it.

4thly, PRayer is a Branch of the Duty and Devotion of the Cloſet, that every one will expect ſhould be conſider'd in a Diſcourſe of Cloſet Religion, and ſome may think ſhould have been more conſider'd than here they will find it. Indeed all ſerious Perſons make a great Account of Prayer; they are ſo far from leaving it out of the Cloſet, that they are apt to run into the other Extream, and make it the only Devotion there. Cloſet Religion, with them, ſignifieth nothing but Cloſet-Prayer; they extend it no farther, and aim at nothing more. This is the Caſe of many, I am afraid. How much they are miſtaken in their Apprehenſions, and how defective in their Practice, the former Diſcourſes will ſhew. But though it be *only a Part*, it muſt be granted, 'tis a moſt neceſſary and important Part of the Duty of the Oratory, and therefore demands a Place in this Work.

As to the Manner, Properties, and ſeveral Qualifications of Prayer, 'tis beſides my preſent Purpoſe to enlarge upon them: Moſt Books of Devotion inſiſt on theſe Things. And I ſhall rather refer the Reader to them, than undertake to do over again, what has been ſo often done, and well done

done already; eſpecially as I have left myſelf little Room for any Thing farther. I muſt not, however, wholly paſs over ſo neceſſary a Branch of ſecret Devotion, and leave it untouch'd; though I ſhall conſider it only in a general and ſuperficial Way; offering a few Remarks, which may be of Uſe for the better underſtanding the Duty, and aſſiſt in the Performance of it.

1ſt, There are certain great and eſſential Requiſites and Qualifications of Prayer which are always the ſame, and always neceſſary; neceſſary to all Perſons and in every Kind of Prayer, and conſequently muſt be found in that of the Cloſet, as well as others; particularly it muſt proceed from an inward divine Principle. 'Tis *the Prayer of the Righteous* that *availeth*, James v. 16. *The Sacrifice of the Wicked is an Abomination to the Lord; but the Prayer of the Upright is his Delight*, Prov. xv. 8. I don't ſay 'tis not the Duty of unſanctified and wicked Men to pray. *Simon Magus*, when in the Gall of Bitterneſs, *&c.* was bid to pray, *Acts* viii. 21, 22. The Prayer of ſuch, when it flows from a Conviction of their Guilt, Danger, Miſery, a Senſe of their ſpiritual Wants, and is accompanied with Deſires of Grace, may be a Means of obtaining Grace, and indeed is appointed for that Purpoſe: But where the Heart is deſtitute of Grace, and of Deſires after it, Prayer muſt be of little Value and Efficacy. Wicked Men are to pray that they may reform, and reform that they may pray with Acceptance. *God heareth not Sinners*, John ix. 31. none that *regard Iniquity in their Hearts*, Pſal. lxvi. 18. Indeed the Prayer of ſuch Perſons is full of Inconſiſtency and Lies, and carries in it a direct Contradiction to the inward Sentiments, Heart and Frame: And what Excellency can there be in ſuch Forms of Hypocriſy and Flattery?

Farther, Prayer muſt be *in Faith*, James i. 6, 7. accompanied with a firm Perſuaſion of the Being and Perfections of God, of his Providence and Government; of his Power, Wiſdom, Goodneſs and Truth; with Reſignation to him, and Dependance upon him. It muſt be with Fervour and Importunity, *Matt.* vii. 7, 8. *&c. James* v. 16. It muſt be in Charity, and attended with a peaceable, forgiving Temper, *Matt.* vi. 12, 14. *Matt.* v. 23, 24. 1 *Tim.* ii. 8. It muſt be in the Name of Chriſt, *John* xvi. 23. *Col.* iii. 17. and in the Spirit, *Eph.* vi. 18. *Jude* 20. perform'd by his Aſſiſtance, and under his Conduct and Influence. Theſe are eſſential Qualifications, requiſite in every Prayer, which God will accept, and from which we can expect Profit and Comfort: The diſtinct Explication of each would take up more Room than I can allow. The Reader would anſwer my Intention in mentioning them, if he be ſollicitous to find theſe Qualifications in himſelf, and diſcover them in all his Addreſſes to God.

2dly, Though the eſſential Properties and Principles of Prayer, as I may call them, are unchangeable, and the ſame in ſecret as in any other Sort of Prayer, yet the Matter of ſecret Prayer is various and different. The Scripture we have read, the Meditation we have been engaged in; the Examination and Review of ourſelves (all which, according to the Method propoſed, may fitly precede) will direct our Petitions, ſupply our Confeſſions, Thankſgivings, *&c.* Often the Occurrences of the Day will furniſh Matter for Prayer, and influence our Devotion: As the Mercies, Deliverances, Trials, Temptations, and Miſcarriages of it. At Night our Prayer ſhould be very much formed with a Reference to theſe Things, and will moſt naturally and pertinently proceed upon theſe Heads.

Heads: And in the Morning, the View and Proſpect of what is before us will conduct us in our Applications to God. We are to conſider our ſtated, known Duties, Dangers, and Difficulties; and if there be any thing extraordinary expected in the Service of the Day, order our Prayers accordingly, have a ſpecial Regard to both Caſes in our Addreſſes. In ſhort, the Providences and Events of each Day, the Affairs and Circumſtances of the Chriſtian are ſo variable, that his Prayer can't be always the ſame without being (to ſay no worſe) leſs pertinent.

3dly, In ſecret Prayer we ſhould have a ſpecial Reſpect to our *preſent Caſe*; not to this *only*, but to this *eſpecially*, ſo as to inſiſt more particularly and copiouſly upon it: As the Supply of a preſent Neceſſity, pardon of a late Tranſgreſſion, Direction in an Affair of Importance depending, Deliverance from an imminent Danger, or threatning Temptation, *&c.* Thus when the *Apoſtle* had the Thorn in the Fleſh, a Meſſenger of Satan ſent to buffet him; he *beſought the Lord thrice that it might depart from* him, 2 *Cor.* xii. 8. (*i. e.*) He continued and repeated his Petitions, inſiſting with great Earneſtneſs (in his ſecret Addreſſes, no doubt) upon that particular Thing. We are encouraged to come boldy to the Throne of Grace that we may obtain Mercy, and find Grace to help *in time of Need*; ſeaſonable, opportune Grace, as the Word ſignifies; Grace anſwerable to our preſent Exigency and Want. We ſhould ſtudy ourſelves, be fully appriz'd of our Caſe, live acquainted with our own Hearts, and have as perfect a Comprehenſion, as we can, of our Circumſtances, Weakneſſes and Wants; and from thence indite our Prayers. As for Inſtance, If we find any Corruption more than ordinarily prevalent; any particular Sin eaſily beſetting

ſetting us; we ſhould, in our Supplications more eſpecially, level againſt, and beg Deliverance from it, and Victory over it. If in the Day we have fallen into this or that Iniquity which we have often confeſſed, we ſhould, in our Retirement at Night, ſingle that out for ſpecial Reſentment, bewailing the Folly, begging Help, and renewing Reſolutions againſt it. If we have received ſignal Favours and Mercies in the Day, our Devotion at Night ſhould ſavour of them, and expreſs the Senſe we have of them. If we have any Duty before us in the Day of Importance and Difficulty, in which we have often miſcarried, we ſhould not overlook this in our Morning Devotion, but lay the Matter before God, and be importunate for his Preſence, Conduct and Bleſſing. "Lord, ſupply and furniſh me for "ſuch a Service and Work, that by thy Provi- "dence I may be called to; preſerve me from the "Weakneſs and Infirmity I ſo often ſuffer by; "grant me a Compoſure and Preſence of Mind "ſuitable to my Occaſions; may I have more "Firmneſs of Mind, Meekneſs, Humility, *&c.* "Oh! may thy Grace be ſufficient for me." There may be many ſuch Strokes and Sallies as theſe in our ſecret Devotion, and often ſhould be. In ſhort, our Prayers ſhould be form'd according to our Hearts, as our Hearts are to be formed according to our Occaſions and Circumſtances. When 'tis thus they are moſt pertinent, and are like to be moſt ſucceſsful.

4thly, 'Tis evident, from what has been ſaid, and may be inferr'd from the Nature of the Duty itſelf, that a greater Liberty may be taken in Cloſet Prayer with reſpect to Matter, Method, Expreſſion, *&c.* than is allowable in publick. We may inſiſt more copiouſly on ſome Particulars, and even on a ſingle Head, than would be proper in pub-

lick; begging a ſpecial Mercy, confeſſing a particular Sin, deprecating an Evil we feel or fear: We may, in private, enlarge upon any of theſe Things, and confine our Prayer to them, more than would be convenient in publick. The *Apoſtle* beſought the Lord *thrice* for the ſame Thing, 1 *Cor.* xii. 8. He often return'd to the Subject, and very pathetically and largely, no doubt, inſiſted upon it. *Chriſt* prayed the third time, ſaying the ſame Words *Matt.* xxvi. 44. I don't ſuppoſe he ſaid only thoſe Words; but being under a particular Preſſure, and his Mind being filled with it, he dwelt upon the Subject; his Devotion run upon it at that Time. A greater Liberty may alſo be uſed here (in ſecret Prayer) *as to Method and Expreſſion. Let him kiſs me with the Kiſſes of his Mouth, for thy Love is better than Wine,* ſaith the Spouſe, *Can.* i. 1. *Draw me, we will run after thee,* ver. 3. How abrupt the Beginning, and incorrect the Style, would the Critick ſay? The divine Paſſion, that ſometimes fills the Heart of the Devout, won't be confined by the Rules of Grammar and Oratory. Indeed Sighs, Groans and Tears are the beſt Oratory in ſecret Prayer: Nor do the little Pauſes, frequent Excurſions and Parentheſes, which an holy *Pathos* may occaſion, marr the Connection and Oratory, but rather improve it. I might add, a greater Liberty may be allow'd *with reſpect to Geſture and the Expreſſion of Aſſertions.* Chriſt *fell on the Ground and prayed,* Mark xiv. 35. And we read, that *in the Days of his Fleſh he offer'd up Prayers and Supplications with ſtrong Crying and Tears,* Heb. v. 7. Devout Perſons know ſomething of this; they are often proſtrate before God, pouring out their Tears and their Souls, with an overflowing and Indulgence of Aſſertions, that in publick would be indecent, but here have an Ornament and Excel-

lency

lency in them. On these Accounts, as well as others, I can't but think that,

5thly, What is called extemporary Prayer is most agreeable to the Closet; it gives more Scope for Enlargement on occasional Subjects, is more suitable to the Liberty, which is not only allowable, but expedient in secret; admits of greater Variety than Forms, and may be better accommodated to every Case the Christian may have before him. Not that I think praying *Extempore*, or without a precomposed set Form of Words, absolutely necessary to the acceptable Performance of secret Prayer. I doubt not but serious Persons, who have long accustom'd themselves to Forms, may exercise great Devotion, and find much Comfort in the Use of them. Indeed the Manner of Prayer (with, or without a Form) I reckon to be so far indifferent, that neither the one nor the other is necessary; so necessary, as that the different Mode can't be acceptable. Nor should we allow ourselves the Liberty that is too commonly taken, to censure those that differ from us in this Matter; as if, because they don't pray in our Mode, there could be no Devotion in their Prayer. I don't question but one Reason of these mutual Censures, is want of experiencing the Way this or that Side condemns. Thus some condemn extemporary, or free Prayer, because they have never tried it; and having, thro' Disuse, brought themselves under an Inability for it, they are ready to think the Case is the same with all others, as with them: And for the same Reason others are apt to censure the Use of Forms; because they have never been accustom'd to them. They can't tell how to pray with any Seriousness by a Form, and so hastily conclude no body else can: Whereas, had the Pious and Good in either Way (supposing the same divine Principles, Gra-

ces and Affections they now have) been accuſtomed to the contrary Way, they might have found much the ſame Devotion in it; 'tis like would have ſhewn the ſame Zeal for it. The Graces of Prayer, Faith, Love, Humility, Contrition, Reſignation and holy Deſires, devout Affections, are the Life and Soul of Prayer, and much more to be regarded than this or that Mode of outward Performance. As for the Claſs of *Ranters*, that open their Mouth wide, and pour out their Reproaches upon *Extempore* Prayer, calling it Cant, Jargon, blaſphemous Effuſions, and the like, I don't think their Rudeneſs worth regarding; I pity their Raſhneſs, and deſpiſe their Inſults.

Nor am I only willing to allow the Lawfulneſs of Forms, but in ſome Caſes to give them the Preference; Biſhop *Wilkins* calls them *Crutches*, and no doubt there are lame Chriſtians that can't go without them, (to ſay nothing of the Inability contracted by Diſuſe). Some are ſo mean in theſe Faculties, have their Minds ſo little open'd, have ſo ſmall a Stock of Ideas, and theſe ſo confuſed; in ſhort, their Experience and Senſe of ſpiritual Things is ſo little, and they move in ſo low a Sphere in Religion, that I don't queſtion but a well compoſed Form may be helpful to them *for a Time*; eſpecially if got off Book, with a Liberty to vary it, and add to it as they can, and find Occaſion. Not but even theſe Perſons, many of them at leaſt, if they endeavour'd it, might, I ſuppoſe, ſurmount the Neceſſity, and outgrow the Uſefulneſs of a Form. Farther Progreſs in Religion, and Acquaintance with God and their own Hearts, would give them Enlargement; *the Spirit of God, ſent forth into their Hearts*, would help their Infirmities, and enable them to cry, *Abba, Father*, Gal. iv. 6. Not that the Spirit will teach them Grammar,

Grammar, Rhetorick, Propriety and Elegance of Expreſſion; but theſe are too mean to have any Streſs laid upon them in a Matter of this Nature, even by wiſe Men, much leſs by God. We *that are evil* will not reject the juſt and dutiful Requeſts of our Children, though they utter them liſping, and in broken Language; much leſs will our heavenly Father do it. *I is* (ego eſt) *a poor vile Sinner, &c.* may have more Oratory in it, before the Throne of Grace, when it proceeds from a ſenſible broken Heart, than the moſt accurate and ſmootheſt Harangue tainted with Pride and *Phariſaiſm*. Excuſe this Digreſſion. What I am ſaying is, that Forms may to ſome Chriſtians be expedient and uſeful; an Help to their Weakneſs, furniſhing them with Matter and Words, guiding them as to Method and Expreſſion, *&c.*

Notwithſtanding theſe Conceſſions, I apprehend *Extempore* Prayer beſt ſuited to the Cloſet; and that ſtated Forms are ordinarily an Hinderance to Devotion, and attended with ſeveral Inconveniencies. They exclude ſuch particular Caſes as Providence lays before us, and invites us to conſider, and which ſhould often, at leaſt, be largely inſiſted upon in ſecret Prayer. They tend to narrow the Faculties, and clog the Devotion of a well prepared Mind. Let us ſuppoſe a Perſon of good Proficiency in Religion, well acquainted with the Scripture and divine Subjects, and with his own Heart in all the Varieties of the Chriſtian Frame; that has been long exerciſed in the ſeveral Parts of his Warfare; has been frequent and fervent in Prayer, in which he has ſpent many Hours and Days with much Enlargement and Succeſs. Let us alſo ſuppoſe him employ'd in ſuch Exerciſes as I have been exhorting to; reading the Scripture, expounding and preaching it to himſelf; meditating on

ſome divine Subject, reviewing the Actions of the Day; and now full of his own particular Caſe, and of thoſe divine Things he has been converſant with; muſt ſuch a Perſon, think we, ſtand ſtill, and pluck his Book out of his Pocket, before he can open his Mouth to God? or would not the Book and Form direct him from the Work he would find lying directly before him, and which his preſent Circumſtances, Heart and Frame lead to? Would he need it? Could he uſe it without being fetter'd and incumber'd? Surely, a Form in this Caſe would be like leaving the Chariot of *Aminadab* to ride in—— If it be ſaid I put the Caſe too ſtrong, and ſuppoſe Attainments not common. I anſwer, the Argument will hold in ſuch Caſes at leaſt, and it will hold proportionably in Inſtances of a lower Nature. If the beſt Chriſtians ſuffer by Forms, others do ſo in the Degree wherein they are above them, and need them not; nor will they (Practice ſuppoſed, and Prejudice laid aſide) be uſeful to any but Chriſtians of the loweſt Claſs.

I may reckon it among the Diſadvantages of a Form, and as another Inſtance thereof, that it inverts the natural Order of Things, and occaſions an indecent ὕστερον πρώτερον in Devotion: Prayer ſhould take Riſe from the Heart; all divine, acceptable Prayer doth ſo, receiving its Formation there. 'Tis properly the preſenting the Deſires to God; conſequently Words are to follow the Affections, not lead them, and be commanded and directed by the Deſires, the inward Sentiments and Frame; whereas in a ſtated Form, the inward Affections are preſcribed to, and, as I may ſay, anticipated: The Heart is rather brought to the Words, than the Words to the Heart; by which Means the proper Source of Prayer is ſhut up, and another opened,

ed. I might add to the ſame Purpoſe, that Forms often hinder Perſons from ſaying what they ſhould, as well as make them ſay what they ſhould not. 'Tis impoſſible that any Form ſhould anſwer every Emergency and Occaſion, and take in all the Variety of the Chriſtian's Caſe. My Circumſtances to Day may require that my Prayer ſhould be very different from what it was Yeſterday, if it be pertinent, and ſuch as my Book will by no Means ſuit; ſo that being confined to it, I am carry'd off my Point, and hinder'd from purſuing the preſent Subject, that by Providence of God, and the State of my Affairs, I am moſt immediately concern'd with. Were all the Subjects of a Kingdom to addreſs their Sovereign in all their Wants, it would ſcarce be thought pertinent to provide a *common Form* for them, when their Caſes are almoſt as many, and as various as their Perſons. And then as Forms prevent what ſhould be ſaid, ſo they frequently lead to what ſhould not, and cannot truly be ſaid; putting Words into the Mouth, to which the preſent State and Frame of the Heart doth not anſwer. But 'tis not my Buſineſs here to manage a Diſpute; nor is it my Deſign, in what I have ſaid, to cenſure the Devotion of thoſe that are otherwiſe minded. I can't queſtion but many pray to very good Purpoſe by a Form; but I beg leave to ſay it appears to me they unneceſſarily hamper themſelves, and that in moſt Caſes, the other Method of free, or *extempore* Prayer, eſpecially in ſecret, is very much preferable, and I have given my Reaſons why I think it ſo, and refer them to the Reader's Judgment.

6thly, Notwithſtanding the greater Liberty allowable in ſecret Prayer, and the Regard that ought to be had therein to our preſent Caſe and Circumſtances; and that conſequently the Chriſtian ſhould

not confine himſelf to any one uniform Method: yet I reckon it of ſome Uſe to underſtand the proper Order and Method of Prayer; and to be well acquainted with the ſeveral Parts of it. Chriſtians have their *common*, as well as ſpecial Caſes; have Deſires, Graces, Mercies, Enjoyments, Infirmities and Wants in *common*, and which are very much the ſame; the ſame in one as in another, and the ſame with particular Perſons at all Times: And no doubt Regard ought to be had to theſe, in the uſual Courſe of our Devotions. Indeed ſpecial Caſes ought not to be overlook'd; but ſhould, as I have hinted, often direct and form our Prayers: But ſtill we are to attend to the great and ſtated Occaſions of Devotion, and Buſineſs of Prayer; confeſſing the common Sins of our Nature and Practice; bleſſing God for the common Mercies of his Providence and Grace; petitioning for ſuch good Things as we, and all ſtand in need of, and that always. The general and common Concernments of Religion, common I mean to the *Fideles*, all the Faithful, are of greateſt Neceſſity and Importance, and therefore ſhould have proper Room in our ſtated Devotions. In order to which we ſhould, as I ſaid, endeavour to underſtand the Method and Matter of Prayer in the whole Compaſs of it: Hereby we ſhall be furniſh'd for the Duty at all times (yet internal Qualifications ſuppoſed;) be kept from Rambling, and be the more regular in our Addreſſes.

That I may more fully explain myſelf here, I ſhall, for the Aſſiſtance of ſuch as need it, repreſent what I take to be, if not the beſt, yet a proper Method of Prayer, comprehending all the Parts of it: A regular Prayer, I reckon, ſhould conſiſt of theſe Particulars; and being diſpoſed in the Order following, they ſhew the *Method* of Prayer, *viz.*

Invocation, Thankſgiving, Confeſſion, Petition, Interceſſion, Self-Dedication, and a Concluſion.

1ſt, *Invocation.* This we ſhould begin with, which includes the Mention of God's Names, Attributes and Perfections, with an Addreſs to him for Audience and Acceptance. We ſhould firſt enlarge upon ſome of the divine Perfections, whereby the Mind may be awed, the Affections raiſed, and a Foundation laid for the Exerciſe of ſuch Graces as make up the Devotion of Prayer; as Fear, Reverence, Love, Truſt, *&c.* And then having view'd and contemplated the glorious Object of Prayer, we ſhould beſpeak his Preſence with us, and Acceptance of us.

2dly, We may next proceed to Thankſgiving; in which, ordinarily, we ſhould be not only diſtinct and particular, but copious; bleſſing and adoring God as the Creator, Preſerver, Governor, and Benefactor of the World; for common Providence; for ſpecial Inſtances of Providence and Grace; all which may be enumerated, and ſhould be enlarged upon. I forbear Inſtances under this and the other Heads, deſigning to exemplify the whole in a Specimen of Prayer. Let me only add, that we ſhould diſpatch at once what concerns one Part and Branch of Prayer, before we proceed to another. As when we are upon the Head of Thankſgiving, we ſhould go through it, before we paſs to another Subject: The not attending to this is one main Occaſion of the Confuſion and Diſorder ſome Perſons fall into in their Prayers.

3dly, Confeſſion may fitly ſucceed Thankſgiving; which we may paſs to in ſome ſuch Manner as this. "But, O my God! how have I requited thee Evil for Good? What unſuitable Returns have I made for that Goodneſs and Mercy of thine that has follow'd me all my Days, *&c.*"

&c." And indeed the Conſideration of the many Favours we have been acknowledging will tend to affect the Heart, and bring it into a penitential Frame, and ſo fit it for the Work it's now to engage in. In our Confeſſion we ſhould endeavour to be as particular and full as we can, laying open the Evils of Heart and Life, with all their Aggravations.

4thly, Petitions may be next ſubjoined, or Supplications for the Bleſſings we want. We may connect it with the former Head thus, "And as my Sins "are many, ſo are my Neceſſities many and great, "Lord, I come to thee for a Supply; bleſs me, "O my God! with all ſpiritual Bleſſings in Chriſt "Jeſus." I mention the Connection, becauſe there is really a Beauty and Advantage in fit Tranſitions, though chiefly in publick Prayer, where more Regard is to be had to them.

5thly, To Petition may be joined Interceſſion: The former reſpects ourſelves, this others. And here we are to give our Charity full Scope, and take in all proper Caſes; praying for Mankind in general; for the Church of Chriſt; for the Community to which we belong; for Magiſtrates, Miniſters; for our Families and Relations; for the afflicted, tempted; for Perſecutors and Enemies.

6thly, Self-dedication will properly enough follow; in which we devote ourſelves to the Service of God, and commit ourſelves to his future Conduct and Protection; begging he would take a fuller Poſſeſſion of our Hearts, *&c.*

7thly, All is to be concluded with a ſort of a Review of the Work; begging Forgiveneſs of what has been amiſs; and for that Purpoſe pleading the Name and Interceſſion of the Lord Jeſus, and confirming the whole with an affectionate *Amen.*

Theſe

Theſe are the ſeveral Parts of Prayer; and this I reckon a very proper Method of it. I know this Order is different from what ſome preſcribe; but as the Thing itſelf is very much indifferent, 'tis not worth while to contend about it, much leſs would I inſiſt upon it as neceſſary. It will, perhaps, be thought Confeſſion ſhould precede Thankſgiving; that having, by the Exerciſe of Repentance and Faith, in the Mediation of Chriſt, made Peace with God, we may, with more Aſſurance and holy Confidence, addreſs ourſelves to him in the remaining Service: And I ſhould ſo far have comply'd with the Objection, as to have given a Specimen or two according to that, and ſome other Variations (though I prefer the Method I have choſe) but that I am obliged to ſtudy Brevity.

Let me add, 'tis not neceſſary to go through all theſe Heads of Prayer at all Times, no, not in publick Prayer, much leſs in ſecret. 'Tis not neceſſary to tie ourſelves up to this Order, eſpecially in our ſecret Addreſſes: We may inſiſt ſometimes on one, or a few Particulars more largely, but tranſiently touching the other, and ſhould ever be ready to attend the Call of Providence, and make Room for ſpecial, occaſional Subjects. In ſhort, all I deſign hereby is to repreſent the Order of Prayer, and draw a Sort of a Plan of it, for the Aſſiſtance of younger Perſons chiefly, tho' ſome others might probably receive Advantage by it. To render my Deſign more effectual, I ſhall exemplify the Rules mention'd, in a *Specimen* of Prayer, which I here ſubjoin.

A Specimen

A Specimen of Prayer; *exhibiting all the Parts of a compleat Prayer in their proper Order; design'd chiefly for the Assistance of younger Persons, and for their Direction in the Method of Prayer.*

The Invocation; being an Acknowledgment of God's Name, his Attributes and Perfections, and an Address for Audience and Acceptance.

BLessed and Glorious God; thou art the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, of whom, through whom, and to whom are all Things, the Father of Mercies, and God of all Grace: I believe that thou art, and art a Rewarder of all those that diligently seek thee. Thou, whose Name alone is *Jehovah*, art the most high over all the Earth; thy Greatness is unsearchable, thy Understanding is infinite, thy tender Mercies are over all thy other Works: From everlasting to everlasting thou art God; always the same, *with whom there is no Variableness, neither Shadow of Turning:* Thou fillest, O Lord, Heaven and Earth with thy Presence; thou searchest the Heart, and triest the Reins; thou knowest my down-sitting and up-rising; thou compassest my Path, and art acquainted with all my Ways; yea, all Things are naked and open to the Eyes of that God, with whom I have to do. Lord, help me to consider this, to represent thee to myself, when I approach thee, in all thy Glories and Excellencies: And do thou suitably impress my Mind therewith; fill my Soul with an Awe and Reverence of thy Majesty, with Trust and Confidence in thee, and all devout Affections: Thou art a Spirit; help me at all times to worship thee in Spirit and in Truth.

And as I am now come to seek thy Grace, and beg thy Presence, Acceptance and Blessing; look down

down upon me in Mercy; O let thy Spirit help my Infirmities, and teach me what to pray for, and as I ought: Give ear unto my Voice, conſider my Meditation; hearken unto the Voice of my Cry, my King and my God, for unto thee will I pray: My Voice ſhalt thou hear in the Morning, in the Morning (and Evening) will I direct my Prayer unto thee and look up: Haſt thou not ſaid, Ask, and ye ſhall receive: ſeek, and ye ſhall find; knock, and it ſhall be opened to you: Make good thy Word unto thy Servant, upon which thou haſt cauſed me to hope; and let the Words of my Mouth, and the Meditation of my Heart, be acceptable in thy Sight, O Lord, my Strength and my Redeemer.

I am not worthy, O Lord, of the leaſt of all thy Mercies: and yet how large a Share have I had of them? Open thou my Lips, and my Mouth ſhall ſhew forth thy Praiſe. I own and adore thee as the great Creator of all Things; for by the Word of the Lord were the Heavens made, and all the Hoſts of 'em by the Breath of his Mouth; he ſpake, and it was done; he commanded, and it ſtood faſt: I am thy Creature, O Lord, thy Hands have made and faſhioned me; thou art the God of the Spirits of all Fleſh; the Father of my Spirit and my Body is thy Workmanſhip: Thine Eye did ſee my Subſtance, yet being imperfect; and in thy Book all my Members were written, which in Continuance were faſhion'd, when as yet there was none of them: Thou haſt cloathed me with Skin and Fleſh, hath fenced me with Bones and Sinews; thou haſt granted me Life and Favour, and thy Viſitation preſerveth my Spirit: In thee I live and move, and have my Being. Thou haſt made me after thy own Image, and thy own Likeneſs, but a little lower than the Angels, and haſt crown'd

me

me with Glory and Honour; haſt taught me more than the Beaſts of the Earth, and made me wiſer than the Fowls of Heaven. Oh! how much am I indebted to thy Bounty and Goodneſs herein? Help me to worſhip and bow down, to kneel before the Lord my Maker: May thoſe Powers, thoſe Faculties and Capacities, by which thou haſt diſtinguiſhed me from the reſt of thy Creatures, and advanced me above them, be devoted to thy Service, and employed in thy Praiſe.

I bleſs thee for thy tender Care of me in my Infancy, in that weak and helpleſs State: Thou tookeſt me out of the Womb, and madeſt me to hope when I hung on the Breaſt: I was caſt upon thee from the Womb; thou art my God from my Mother's Bowels, it is owing to thy Providence that I died not from the Womb, that I *then* gave not up the Ghoſt; that the Knees prevented me and the Breaſt that I ſhould ſuck: This I would acknowledge with a thankful Heart. Accept, O Lord, my Deſire to praiſe thee! I bleſs thee for thy conſtant Attendance of the ſame Providence ever ſince; and for all the Inſtances of thy Goodneſs towards me; that thou haſt fed me all my Life, and redeemed me from all evil. I bleſs thee for Deliverance from Sickneſs and Diſtempers, and from the many Dangers I have been expoſed to: That I was not cut off with pining Sickneſs, or with a ſudden Stroke, [particularly by *, *&c.*] That I was not deprived of the Reſidue of my Years, but that thou haſt in Love to my Soul, deliver'd me from the Pit of Corruption. Lord, thou haſt deliver'd my Soul from Death, mine Eyes

* Here mention ſuch ſpecial Deliverances as you have had, a Catalogue of which it's good to preſerve.

from

from Tears, and my Feet from falling. Oh! may thy Goodneſs lead to Repentance; may I walk before the Lord in the Land of the Living.

I bleſs thee I have been brought forth in a Land enjoying the Goſpel, and not in the Region and Shadow of Death; that I was not born among *Pagans*, who have not a Bible to uſe, or *Papiſts*, who will not allow the Uſe of it: Thou haſt ſhew'd thy Word unto *Jacob*, thy Statutes and Judgments unto *Iſrael*; thou haſt not dealt ſo with many other Nations; and as for thy Judgments, they have not known them. O my Soul! praiſe thou the Lord. I bleſs thee for thy Goſpel; for thy Son, the Redeemer of loſt Sinners. May his Name be (to me) as Ointment poured forth. O bleſſed be God, thou haſt ſo loved the World, as to give thy only begotten Son; *That in the Fulneſs of Time thou didſt ſend forth thy Son, made of a Woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the Adoption of Sons.* I bleſs thee for his holy Life, meritorious Death, triumphant Reſurrection and Aſcenſion; for his ſitting at thy right hand, where he ever lives to make Interceſſion for us. 'Tis a faithful Saying, and worthy of all Acceptation, that Jeſus Chriſt came into the World to ſave Sinners (may I not add, of whom I am chief!) Lord, grant me an Intereſt in this great Salvation! I bleſs thee for thy Spirit, whom thou haſt ſent to abide with the Church for ever; to convince of Sin, ſanctify and renew the Heart, and dwell in the Souls of Believers. Oh! may he take up his Abode in my Soul, quickening, guiding, ſealing, and comforting me. I bleſs thee for the Appointment of the Goſpel-Miniſtry; that thou haſt given Paſtors and Teachers for the perfecting of the Saints, for the Work of the Miniſtry, for the edifying the Body of Chriſt. I bleſs

thee for all the Ordinances of the Goſpel, and for the conſtant Benefit and Advantage I have enjoyed of publick Inſtruction: Oh! may I be *a Doer of the Word, and not an Hearer only, deceiving my own Soul:* Lord, teach me to profit; make thy Word the Savour of Life unto Life to my Soul.

I am thankful, O Lord, I was born of Parents who profeſs the Goſpel, and who have been ſollicitous, and concern'd to bring me up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord. I bleſs thee I was born in thy Family, in thy Church, within thy Covenant; that I was in Infancy ſolemnly devoted to thee, entered among thy Diſciples and Servants. I bleſs thee for the early Care of my Parents towards me, towards my Body, eſpecially for their Care of my immortal Soul; for their repeated Inſtructions, faithful Admonitions and Reproofs, for their ſeaſonable Corrections, good Example, and affectionate Prayers. Oh! may I never be unthankful to thee the Author, nor to them the Inſtruments of ſo much Good. I bleſs thee for all the Helps I have had for my Improvement in uſeful Knowledge, eſpecially in the Knowledge of God and Jeſus Chriſt, whom to know is Life eternal, that I can read thy Word; have been inſtructed in the Principles of the Doctrine of Chriſt, and that I have ſtill Line upon Line, and Precept upon Precept; ſtill enjoy the publick Teaching of thy Miniſters. O my God, grant all may not be in vain; how much ſhall I have to anſwer for, if after all I be found unholy, unſanctified, unfruitful, a Cumberer of the Ground! Oh! Water all from above; write thy Law in my Heart, help me that I may incline mine Ear unto Wiſdom, and apply my Heart to Underſtanding. I bleſs thee for the Reſtraints of thy Grace and Providence, that I am not as vile and profane as many

others

others of my Acquaintance. I bleſs thee that thou haſt, as I would humbly hope, made ſome good Impreſſions on my Soul, haſt * begun a good Work there; haſt called me by thy Grace, and revealed thy Son in me. Lord, ſtrengthen what thou haſt wrought, and grant me more Evidence of that great and good Work! perform it to the Day of Chriſt Jeſus. I bleſs thee for the Supplies of thy Providence, for Bread to eat, and Raiment to put on; for continued Life and Health, for the Direction and Conduct of thy Grace and Spirit, in many Particulars; for the Affection and Kindneſs of my Parents and Relations, and Countenance of other Friends; for the Safety of every Night, and Comfort of every Morning; and above all, for the Hope and Proſpect of a glorious Immortality. O my Soul! bleſs the Lord, and all that's within me bleſs his holy Name; bleſs the Lord, O my Soul! and forget not all, or any of his Benefits: Lord, may I not only ſpeak, but live thy Praiſe.

† But, O my God! how have I requited thee Evil for Good? what unſuitable Returns have I made for that Goodneſs and Mercy of thine, that has follow'd me all my Days? I am aſhamed, and bluſh to lift up my Face before thee, O God; for mine Iniquities are increaſed over mine Head: and my Treſpaſs is grown up to the Heavens: Lord, I would lie in the Duſt, ſmite on the Breaſt, and cry unclean, unclean. I own, O Lord, I am the Seed of evil Doers; I have a ſinful, ſinning Na- † Confeſſion of Sin.

* This muſt be left out, or varied, as the Caſe of Perſons may by them be apprehended to require.

ture, and my Life hitherto has been ſtain'd with many actual Tranſgreſſions: *By one Man's Diſobedience* many, *all were made Sinners*; and I among the reſt: *I was ſhapen in Iniquity, and in Sin did my Mother conceive me.* And how ſoon did this Fountain of Heart-Corruption iſſue forth, and ſhew itſelf in ſuitable Streams; my firſt Grapes were wild Grapes: How much of that Folly have I experienc'd, that's bound up in the Heart of a Child? The Imagination of my Heart has been evil from my Youth; I have been a Tranſgreſſor even from the Womb, going aſtray as ſoon as born: How early did Pride, Anger, Envy, Revenge, unruly Appetite, Self-Will, and other head-ſtrong Corruptions break forth, and appear in my Life? I was ſoon, too ſoon, wiſe to do Evil, but alas to do Good I had no Knowledge! Oh! remember not the Sins of my Youth, nor my Tranſgreſſions, but according to thy Mercy remember me for thy Goodneſs Sake. And, O Lord, have I not reaſon to ſay that my Guilt has increaſed with many Years? I have walked very much in the Way of my own Heart, and in the Sight of my Eyes: I have not improved my Time, Talents, Means of Grace, and Opportunities of ſerving and enjoying my God, as I ought. Oh! how many the Sins of my Thoughts, Deſires, Affections, Words, Actions; how many my Omiſſions and Commiſſions; How many the Sins of my common Converſe, how great the Iniquity of my holy Things? How defective have I been in the Duty of the Cloſet, the Aſſembly, and the Family; how many unmortified Luſts have I yet to complain of? How great my Pride, Paſſion, and Worldlineſs? I have thought of myſelf above what is meet; have not govern'd my own Spirit, but Anger has reſted in my Boſom, and the Sun many a time gone down on my Wrath: My Con-

verſation has not been without Covetouſneſs: I have indulged the Fleſh, and made Proviſion for it to fulfil the Luſts thereof: I have profan'd thy Name, thy Day, thine Ordinances; have made light of Chriſt, grieved thy Spirit, done Diſpite to him: I have violated the Laws of Juſtice, Truth, Chaſtity, Meekneſs and Love: I have not keept myſelf from mine Iniquity, but have often repeated my Folly and Guilt, particularly in the Inſtance of——* And, O my God! how deeply aggravated are all my Sins? they are againſt Light and Conviction, againſt Promiſes, Vows, manifold Experience; againſt great Grace and Love. Oh! caſt an Eye of Pity upon me; I am vile, what ſhall I anſwer thee? I am all over as an unclean Thing: As a Fountain caſteth out her Waters, ſo hath my Heart caſt out Wickedneſs. Lord, I abhor myſelf, and repent in Duſt and Aſhes: Who can underſtand his Errors? *Cleanſe thou me from ſecret Faults.*

† And as my Sins are many, ſo my Neceſſities are many and great: Lord, I come to thee for a Supply; I come for a Bleſſing, a ſuitable and effectual Bleſſing. Bleſs me, O my God! with that great Bleſſing, the Pardon of all Iniquity; let my Tranſgreſſion be forgiven, and my Sin covered; impute not Iniquity unto me; blot out as a Cloud my Tranſgreſſions, and as a thick Cloud my Sins. Oh! *Purge me with Hyſſop, and I ſhall be clean; waſh me, and I ſhall be whiter than Snow:* I have no Merit to plead, but caſt myſelf upon thy Sovereign Mercy in the Redeemer; thou haſt declared thyſelf the Lord *Gracious*, *Merciful*, *Long-ſuffering*, † Petition for Supplies.

* Here it will be proper to name (in your ſecret Devotion) the particular Sin you are moſt addicted to, and for which Conſcience oftenest rebukes you.

abundant in Goodneſs and Truth; keeping Mercy for Thouſands, forgiving Iniquity, Tranſgreſſion and Sin: Oh! may I experience that Bounty and Grace that is thy very Nature! I am miſerable, but 'tis my Encouragement I have to do with a God of Mercy: I have ſinned, but Chriſt has died. Oh! juſtify me freely by thy Grace, through the Redemption that is in Chriſt. Lord, I plead the Blood of Atonement, accept me in the Beloved: And, O heal and ſanctify this ſinful Nature of mine! help me to put off the *Old Man which is corrupt, and to put on the new Man, which after God is created in Righteouſneſs and true Holineſs*; create a clean Heart, and renew aright Spirit within me: Help me to crucify the Fleſh with the Affections and Luſts; that the Body of Sin may be deſtroyed, and henceforth I may not ſerve Sin: Enlighten my Mind, and grant me the Spirit of Wiſdom and Revelation in the Knowledge of Chriſt; *Open thou mine Eyes, that I may ſee wondrous Things out of thy Law; teach me thy Statutes, and order my Steps in thy Word*; ſo that I may be filled with the Knowledge of thy Will, in all Wiſdom and ſpiritual Underſtanding: Subdue my Will, overcome the Enmity thereof; caſt down lofty Imaginations, and bring every Thought into Subjection to the Obedience of Chriſt; make me willing in the Day of thy Power; help me to *ſet* my *Affections on Things above, and not on Things on the Earth:* Give me a faithful Conſcience, an Heart that will ſmite when I do Evil; make my Memory ready and ſtrong in divine Things: And Oh! that it may be furniſh'd therewith; that the Word of Chriſt may dwell richly in me in all Wiſdom. Oh! let all old Things be done away, and all Things become new: let the God of Peace ſanctify me wholly; grant that my whole Spirit, Soul and Body, may be preſerv'd

blameleſs to the Coming of Chriſt. O my God! hear my Requeſts herein; haſt thou not promiſed thou wilt *give* thy *holy Spirit to thoſe who ask it*; I plead thy Promiſe; *be it unto thy Servant according to thy Word.* Let thy Spirit dwell in me, as a Spirit of Grace; grant me the conſtant Supply of the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt; furniſh me with all divine Grace, and farther Degrees thereof: May I *give all Diligence, and add to my Faith Virtue, to Virtue Knowledge, to Knowledge Temperance, to Temperance Patience, to Patience Godlineſs, and to Godlineſs brotherly Kindneſs, and to brotherly Kindneſs Charity.* Oh! may theſe Things be in me, and abound, that I may neither be barren nor unfruitful in the Knowledge of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Grant me all the Fruits and Graces of thy Spirit, and fulfil the Work of Faith, of Hope, of Love, and of every other Grace with Power: Help me to flee youthful Luſts; make me ſober-minded; help me to put on the whole Armour of God, that I may ſtand againſt the Wiles of the Devil; may withſtand in the evil Day, and having done all, be able to ſtand: Keep me from the Evil of this World, give me that Faith which will overcome it: Help me to conſider one Thing is needful, and chuſe the good Part, that ſhall not be taken from me: May I ſeek firſt the Kingdom of God, and the Righteouſneſs thereof; and whilſt ſo many ſay, who will ſhew us any Good; let it be the conſtant Language of my Soul, *Lord, lift up the Light of thy Countenance upon me*; this will put Gladneſs into my Heart. Teach me my Duty in all the Parts of it; may I be compleat in all the Will of God, and walk in all the Statutes and Ordinances of the Lord blameleſs. Help me to diſcharge my Duty towards my ſeveral Relations, whether Superiors, Inferiors, or Equals: Help me to love my Neighbour as myſelf;

ſelf; to do to others as I would they do to me; may I walk uprightly, ſpeak the Truth in my Heart, not backbite with my Tongue, nor take up a Reproach againſt my Neighbour: Cloath me with Humility, give me the Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit, and grant I may ſhew all Meekneſs towards all Men: That I may do Juſtice, love Mercy, and walk humbly with my God: Help me to love my Enemies, and if I have ought againſt any Man, to forgive, as God for Chriſt's Sake forgiveth us; to bleſs them that curſe me, and pray for them that deſpitefully uſe me; that I may appear to be one of the Children of God, who maketh his Sun to ſhine on the Evil and on the Good, and ſendeth Rain on the Juſt and on the Unjuſt. Oh! that herein I may *be perfect, as my Father in Heaven is perfect.* Help me duly to conſider my latter End, often to think of Death and Eternity: I would not preſume of long Life, and talk of Goods laid up for many Years, of Pleaſures and Diverſions for many Years; when it may be this Night my Soul ſhall be required of me. Lord, teach me to number my Days, to haſten my Preparation for dying; and whatever my Hand finds to do, to do it *now*, without Delay, and do it with all my Might; for there is no Work, nor Device, nor Knowledge in the Grave whither I am going. Oh! that I may not truſt to a Death-bed Repentance; nor defer the great Work of Religion to old Age; but grant I may *remember* my *Creator in the Days of* my *Youth, while the evil Days come not, nor the Years draw nigh, when I ſhall ſay*, and find, *I have no Pleaſure in them.* Lord, all my Wants are known to thee, all my Deſire is before thee; grant me my Petitions, and let thy Grace be ſufficient for me.

* Interceſſion for others.

* And as thou doſt require that Supplications, Prayers, Interceſſions, and giving of Thanks, be made

made for all Men, which is good and acceptable in the Sight of God our Saviour, I would humbly recommend the Caſe of others to thee. Shower down, O Lord, thy Bleſſings upon the Inhabitants of this World: *May thy Way be known upon Earth, and thy Salvation unto all Nations. Let all the People praiſe thee, O Lord, yea, let all the People praiſe thee;* give thy Son *the Heathen for his Inheritance, and the uttermoſt Part of the Earth for his Poſſeſſion;* bring in the Fulneſs of the *Gentiles* that all *Iſrael* may be ſaved: Look down in a ſpecial Manner upon this Land; be a Wall of Fire about us, and the Glory in the midſt of us. Bleſs the King, and all in Authority under him, that thy People may lead a quiet and peaceable Life in all Godlineſs and Honeſty. Bleſs the Miniſters of thy Word; Lord, make them faithful and ſucceſsful, cloath them with Salvation and Succeſs, that thy Saints may ſhout for Joy; eſpecially bleſs thoſe under whoſe Miniſtry I am placed; bleſs them in their Bodies, Souls, Studies and Miniſtrations: Oh! may they come to us who hear them in the Fulneſs of the Bleſſing of the Goſpel of Chriſt; enable them always to ſpeak the Things that become ſound Doctrine; and Lord help me to profit by their Endeavours. Oh! may I be one of thoſe who ſhall be their Joy and Crown of rejoicing in the Preſence of Jeſus Chriſt, at his Coming; open my Heart as thou didſt *Lydia*'s, that I may attend to the Things that are ſpoken by them. Bleſs my Parents (or Family where I dwell) make an Hedge about them, about their Houſe, and all that they have on every Side; let thy Candle ſhine on their Tabernacle; continue their Life and Health, and faithful Endeavours for my Good; and Lord make me a Comfort to them: Oh! may I be their rejoicing, may they ſee me walking in the Truth; may I not prove one

of thoſe fooliſh Children, that is the Heavineſs of his Father and Mother: Bleſs all my Relations, Friends, Acquaintance; bleſs them with all good Things, eſpecially with all ſpiritual Bleſſings in Chriſt Jeſus; graciouſly pity the afflicted, relieve and help them, [particularly, *&c.* *] ſuccour the tempted, provide for the Poor, and be a preſent Help to all in Time of Trouble: May the Grace of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt be with their Spirit.

† The Dedication and Surrender.

† And wilt thou, O my God! accept a poor Creature that has been lying at thy Foot, pleading for Mercy? I am thine by many Engagements; thy Servant, the Son of thy Handmaid, devoted to thee in my Infancy; I believe it was a wiſe and good Choice my Parents made when they choſe thee for my God: I deſire to ſtand to that Choice, and as I have †† been often attempting to give up myſelf to thee, and have profeſſed to chuſe thee for my God: Lord, I would do it over again, renew and confirm my Choice; and with a fuller and more perfect Conſent avouch thee as my God: Lord, to thee I reſign and devote myſelf, Soul, Body, Time, all I have and am; I would renounce every Luſt, hate every falſe Way, be thine, only, entirely, and for ever thine. Accept this Heart of mine, O Lord, dead and carnal as it is; thou canſt change it, and fit it for thy Service. O come and take full Poſſeſſion of my Soul; admit me under thy Protection, gather me under thy Wing, let me dwell in thy ſecret Place; keep me from the Evil of this World; help me to ſet the Lord always before me; be thou at my right Hand, and I ſhall not be moved: Lord, I am thine, ſave me.

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* Here mention the Caſe of any you know in Affliction, and recommend it to God. †† This muſt be left out or alter'd by thoſe that can't truly ſay ſo.

* And now, O Lord, what wait I for? my Hope is in thee. Let thine Eyes be open unto the Supplication of thy Servant: Thou art the God that heareſt Prayer, and therefore I come unto thee. O forgive the Iniquity of my holy Things; let all my Thankſgivings, Confeſſions and Petitions, be accepted and anſwered: Accept my Acknowledgments for * The Concluſion.

[*To be added at Morning.*] the Mercy of the Night; bleſſed be God I laid me down and ſlept, and thou madeſt me to dwell in Safety; take Care of me through this Day, fit me for all the Duty, Work, and Trials of every Day, and for my laſt Day.

[*To be added at Night.*] the Mercy of this Day; that no Evil has befallen me in it. O pardon the Sin of the Day in my Thoughts, Words, and Actions; take me under thy Protection this Night: I would lay me down and ſleep; do thou ſuſtain me, raiſe me in the Morning, and when I awake, may I be ſtill with thee.

All which I beg in the Name, and through the Mediation of the Lord Jeſus, who has taught us to pray after this Manner, ſaying, *Our Father which art*, &c.

I have already ſaid, I don't intend this as a ſtated Plan, much leſs as a Form. I can't think it adviſable for the Chriſtian *always* to pray in this Manner, in his Cloſet; much leſs in theſe preciſe Words. It may, however, be uſeful as an Introduction to Prayer, exhibiting the whole in its ſeveral Parts and Order; and being moſtly in Words of Scripture, may not only direct as to Method, but furniſh with Matter and Expreſſions; I mean it may do ſo ſometimes, and with reſpect to ſome Perſons. Others don't need ſuch Preſcriptions and Rules, and would ſuffer by the Confinement of them; and therefore I add, 7thly,

7thly, That the moſt perfect Manner of Prayer is very much above, not only Forms, but any Rules of Method, and is directed and conducted by the preſent Frame and Bent of the Mind; and ſo is *extempore* in more Reſpects than one; proceeding *pro re natâ*, according to particular Occaſions, without being confined to any ſtated, preſcribed Words, Order or Matter. Sometimes the devout Chriſtian dwells, and expatiates upon a few Particulars, that his Circumſtances point out to him, and ſummon his Attention to, and that his preſent Frame leads him to. As Supply for a Duty and Service, now before him, and which his Heart is much ſet upon. 'Tis not enough to mention this *incidentally* in his Petitions; but the main of his Prayer, and often of all his Prayers, for Days or Weeks, runs upon it. At another Time, Help againſt this or that Infirmity, Deliverance from an eminent Trial, commands his Prayer; like the *Apoſtle*, who beſought the Lord *thrice, that the Thorn in the Fleſh, the Meſſenger of Satan, might depart from* him, 2 Cor. xii. 7, 8. Sometimes eminent Favours in Providence, outward Deliverances, great Enlargements, Aſſiſtance, and Improvement in Religion, draw out, and engage the Affections in an extraordinary Manner, and ſupply the Prayer for a conſiderable while: Not that other Heads of Prayer are wholly neglected; but this is the predominant Subject; as it fills the Heart, ſo it in a great Meaſure fills the Prayer. Sometimes Interceſſion for others has the like Intereſt and Stroke in our Prayers. Chriſt ſeems to have a ſpecial Reference to his Diſciples, the Difficulty and Succeſs of their Office, in the Prayer he was engaged in, *Luke* vi. 12. *He went out into a Mountain to pray, and continued all Night* in the Oratory of *God*. It follows in the next

next Verſe, that *when it was Day he called unto him his Diſciples, and of them he choſe twelve, whom alſo he named Apoſtles.* Before he ſent them forth into the World, upon ſuch an important, difficult Service, he recommends them to God in a Night of ſolemn Prayer. His Prayer, I reckon, was moſtly Interceſſion; which is ſometimes the Caſe of ſome of his Followers, of them eſpecially, that are bleſſed with the moſt abundant Meaſures of the Spirit of Supplication, and have their Minds enriched with a larger Portion of divine Zeal and Love: They are not ſo taken up with the Concerns of their own Souls, as to overlook the Concerns of others, eſpecially the high and dear Intereſts of the Church of God. The *Apoſtle* pray'd *Night and Day* exceedingly for the *Theſſalonians*, 1 Theſſ. iii. 10. and remember'd *Timothy without ceaſing in* his *Prayers Day and Night*, 2 Tim. i. 3. Many ſuch devout Interceſſors there have been, and I doubt not ſtill are, who have their Hours and Days of Supplication for the Church, and for particular Perſons, one while wreſtling with God, like *Monica*, the Mother of *Auſtin*, for the Converſion of this or that Son, or other Relation; another while pleading for farther, ſpecial, ſeaſonable Bleſſings. A good Man uſed to have a ſtated Evening every Week, ſet apart to pray for his Children and Family; nor was his Labour in vain in the Lord.

Sometimes the Faculties being more than ordinarily excited and raiſed, and the Force of them drawn out and united upon theſe particular Occaſions, the Soul is carried upon the Wings of holy Affections (I may add, often of the holy Spirit) above preſcribed Rules, for either Matter, Order, or Expreſſion. It has an higher and more noble Furniture: Such Things as might be Helps to others, and at other Times would be impertinent now,

now, not only uſeleſs, but an Embaraſſment and Hinderance. Several Inſtances might be given of this more devout Frame of Soul, and of the Manner in which it expreſſes itſelf. I have read of a Perſon, that under more than common Impreſſions of Religion, would begin a Prayer, and after half a Quarter, or a Quarter of an Hour upon the Knees, would fall proſtrate on the Face, to which he found an Inclination too ſtrong to be reſiſted; and thus he continued in the Time of Retirement for Months, ſpending Part of the Time on his Knees, and Part in a low Proſtration. A Soul in this Poſture is unqueſtionably above common Rules; to confine him to a Form would be like fettering a Racer, or faſtening the Mountain Eagle to a Log of Wood. The Voice is here ſometimes wholly ſuppreſſed; there are many ſilent Parentheſes with Sighs, Groans, and Tears; which are ſo far from interrupting the Prayer, that they carry it on with the greateſt Vigour and Life. And this I reckon an higher Form of Devotion, and the moſt perfect Manner of Prayer *in the Oratory*.

I can't, I confeſs, agree with a learned Perſon, the late Author of *the Religion of Nature*. Having endeavour'd to prove it better to pronounce a Prayer, than only to think it over, ſince the very Sound of the Words affects us; " He adds *, It being " found that we muſt make uſe of Words, it can't " be denied that we ought to uſe the beſt and pro- " pereſt we can. This can't be done in extem- " poraneous Effuſions, and therefore there muſt " be Forms premeditated, the beſt we are capable " of making or procuring, if we would worſhip " God to the beſt of our Capacity—— Every " Thing ought to be expreſſed with Method, in " Phraſes that are grave and pointing, and with " ſuch a true Eloquence, as engages all our Atten-

* P. 123.

tion;

" tion; and repreſents our deepeſt Senſe without " Affectation, or needleſs Repetitions. Theſe Con- " ſiderations have cauſed me many times to won- " der at thoſe Men, who diſpute againſt pre-con- " ceived Forms of Prayer. They who talk ſo " much of the Spirit of Prayer, ſeem to know " but little of it." So common is it for the greateſt Men, Maſters of Reaſoning and Demonſtration in Things they have been converſant with, to talk at Random in Things they know not, and have never tried. Devout Minds, often at leaſt, need not Words *grave and pointing* to excite their Affections; they bring their Affections with them to the Duty, and theſe will command Words as proper as is neceſſary: Or if their Affections are to be excited and kindled in the Duty, 'tis from ſomething higher and more divine than fine Phraſes. Not to ſay that the Art of Words, and the Sound in pronouncing them, which this Gentleman thinks an Advantage in ſecret Prayer, only tends to excite, what has been ſo often condemned as *mechanical Affection*. In ſhort, ſome may need the Help of Forms, Rules of Method, and a Supply of Matter; others are above them. And I apprehend, the moſt divine Manner of Prayer has leaſt of theſe Things in it. I beg Leave to ſubjoin a Paſſage or two from a learned * Biſhop. " As there is " one Sort of Prayer, wherein we make uſe of the " Voice, which is neceſſary in publick, and may " ſometimes have its own Advantages in private; " and another wherein, tho' we utter no Sound, " yet we conceive the Expreſſions, and form the " Words, as it were, in our Minds; ſo there is " a third and more ſublime Kind of Prayer, where- " in the Soul takes an higher Flight; and having " collected all its Forces by long and ſerious Me- " ditation, it darteth itſelf, if I may ſo ſpeak, to- " wards

* Life of Godin the Soul of Man, *p.* 97.

" wards God in Sighs and Groans, and Thoughts,
" too big for Expreſſion: As when after a deep
" Contemplation of the divine Perfections, appear-
" ing in all his Works of Wonder, it addreſſeth
" itſelf to him in the profoundeſt Adoration of
" his Majeſty and Glory: Or, when after ſad Re-
" flections on its Vileneſs and Miſcarriages, it pro-
" ſtrates itſelf before him, with the greateſt Con-
" fuſion and Sorrow, not daring to lift up its
" Eyes, or utter one Word in his Preſence: Or,
" when having well conſider'd the Beauty of Ho-
" lineſs, and the unſpeakable Felicity of thoſe that
" are truly Good, it panteth after God, and ſend-
" eth up ſuch vigorous and ardent Deſires, as no
" Words can ſufficiently expreſs. This Mental
" Prayer is of all other the moſt effectual to puri-
" fy the Soul, and may be term'd the great Secret
" of Devotion, and one of the moſt powerful In-
" ſtruments of the divine Life; and it may be, the *A-*
" *poſtle* hath a peculiar Reſpect unto it, when he ſaith,
" *That the Spirit helpeth our Infirmities, making Inter-*
" *ceſſion for us with Groanings that cannot be uttered*;
" or as the Original may bear, that *cannot be*
" *worded.* A few of theſe inward Aſpirations will
" do more than a great many fluent and melting
" Expreſſions." I mention this not as the com-
mon Attainment of Chriſtians (though 'tis at-
tainable, and what ſome have, at times, attained);
but as an Inſtance of the more ſublime, perfect De-
votions, tranſcending not only Forms, but all Rules,
which yet ordinarily, and to ſome may have their Uſe.

8thly, Whatever Variety there may be in the
Matter, Method, and external Manner of Prayer,
all true, acceptable, ſucceſsful Prayer is perform'd
by the Aſſiſtance and Influence of the holy Spi-
rit. His Concern and Intereſt in this Duty is ex-
preſſed in ſeveral Scriptures, and imply'd in more.

As

As *Rom.* iii. 26. *Gal.* iv. 6. *Eph.* vi. 18. *Jude* 20. I know ſome interpret theſe Texts ſo as to leave the preſent Church little or no Intereſt in them, placing the Help of the Spirit in Prayer, here ſpoken of, among the *Chariſmata*, or extraordinary Gifts of the primitive Church; and that were peculiar to the Age of Inſpiration: But I am perſuaded theſe Expoſitors will find a large Body of Chriſtians pleading againſt them, not only from the Laws of Interpretation, but from their own Experience, and that as long as the Church endures. The Remark of an ingenious Writer is not impertinent here. " * That the Gift of Prayer is not " expreſſed among the extraordinary Gifts, either " *Joel* ii. or *Acts* ii. where the Prophecy of *Joel* is accompliſh'd: Nor is it mention'd particular- " ly in the Epiſtles of St. *Paul*, among the mira- " culous Gifts of the holy Spirit, in thoſe Places " where they are enumerated; indeed the Gift of " Prayer is an unknown Tongue, ſeems to be ſpo- " ken of, 1 *Cor.* xiv. but that refers to the Gift of " Tongues rather than to the Gift of Prayer. And " 'tis not unlikely that the Omiſſion of the Gift of " Prayer (or praying in the Spirit) in thoſe Texts " where the extraordinary Gifts are reckon'd up, was " with deſign to intimate, this is none of them." *Wats's* Guide to Prayer, *p.* 175.

Nor do I think what he adds (*p.* 177.) groundleſs. " I confeſs, ſaith he, the holy Spirit hath " been, in a great Meaſure, ſo long departed from " his Churches, that we are tempted to think all his " Operations in Prayer, Preaching, *&c.* belong on- " ly to the firſt Ages of Chriſtianity: And it was " from this Abſence of the Spirit that Men pro- " ceeded to invent various Methods to ſupply the " Want of him in Prayer, by *Pater Noſters*, *Beads*, " *Litanies*, &c. and other Forms, ſome good, ſome " bad; to which they confined the Churches to

" keep

"keep up the Form of Worſhip, and the Atten-
"tion of the People." When the *Schechina* of the Spirit, the inward Beauty, Strength and Glory of the Church, was in a great Meaſure withdrawn, Men ſubſtituted an Image in its Room to ſupply its Place. The learned *Selden* undertakes to prove †, that the *Jews* had no Forms of Prayer before *Ezra*'s Time, and that he, and the Elders with him, compoſed them a Form, conſiſting of Eighteen Benedictions. Nor can I diſcern any tolerable Evidence of the Uſe of Forms in the firſt Ages of the Chriſtian Church, till after the Apoſtacy began, and the Glory, the holy *Paraclete*, had in a great Degree, departed from *Iſrael*.

† *In Eutichii Alexand. Orig.* p. 42, 43.

But I am not here to run out into a Controverſy; nor would I be thought to inſinuate that the divine Spirit doth never afford his Aſſiſtance in the Uſe of Forms, I am far from thinking ſo. I believe all good Men pray by the Spirit more or leſs, whether with, or without Forms; and that ſome have more of the Spirit *with Forms*, than others *without them*, (though I reckon his Help, if attended to, would ordinarily ſet Chriſtians above them). What I am pleading for at preſent is, that there is an Aſſiſtance of the Spirit to be expected in the Duty of Prayer; that this is neceſſary, and that it ſhould be the Endeavour of good Men to ſecure it in all their Addreſſes to God. Wherein it lies, how it may be diſcern'd, the different Meaſures of it to different Perſons, or to the ſame Perſons at different times, with other Things which concern the full Explication of the Subject, muſt not now be inquir'd into. I ſhall only juſt touch a few Particulars with Reference to it (the Spirit's Help in Prayer) without Enlargement.

1ſt. He preſcribes the Rules and Laws of Prayer, furniſhes us with our *Rubrick*, as I may expreſs it.

2dly, He

2dly. The holy Spirit works in us thoſe Graces, and that Temper of Mind, by which we anſwer our Rule in ſome Meaſure: He's the Author of the Faith, Love, Humility, Repentance, Charity, Reſignation, Dependence and Importunity, and all the gracious Diſpoſitions he requires in Prayer: He has indited the Rule of Prayer, and he ſets the Heart to it, forms it to a Correſpondence therewith.

3dly, He ſtirs up the Gift of God in us, excites his own Graces, and helps us to exerciſe them ſuitably to the Subject before us, the different Matter of our Prayer. This is ſo well repreſented by good Mr. *Wats*, that I ſhall borrow a Paragraph from him, and therein expreſs my own Senſe. " * He " ſpiritualizes our natural Affections, and fixes them " on proper Objects, and enlarges and enlightens " their natural Activity. When Sin is recollected, " he awakens Anger, Shame and Sorrow; when " God is repreſented to the Mind in his Glory and " Juſtice, he overſpreads the Soul with holy Awe " and humble Fear. When the Lord Jeſus and his " Redemption are upon the Thoughts, the holy " Spirit warms and raiſes our Deſire and Love. " We are in ourſelves cold and dead to ſpiritual " Things; he makes us lively in Prayer, and holds " us to the Work; he begets holy Reverence of " God, while we adore him; he works in us De- " light in God, and longing Deſires after him; " Fervency and Importunity in our Petitions for " ſpiritual Mercies; Submiſſion and Reſignation " to the Will of God in temporal Things; Faith " in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and Hope in the Pro- " miſes of the Goſpel, while we plead with God for " an Anſwer to our Prayers. He alſo fills us with " holy Joy and Exultation in God, while we re- " collect in Prayer his Glories, or his Benefits, and " awakens all the Springs of Thankſgiving." In

* Guide to Prayer, *p.* 197.

ſhort, he ſanctifieth both Heart and Frame; by the firſt Work he gives the fundamental, habitual Principles of Prayer, and by the other, a preſent Diſpoſition and Fitneſs for it. *We know not what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit helpeth our Infirmities,* Rom. viii. 26.

4thly, The Spirit's Aſſiſtance, eſpecially in the actual Performance of the Duty, is with great Variety: Some have leſs Meaſures of praying Graces from him, as a Spirit of Sanctification, than others; and leſs of his Concurrence and Excitation when engaged in Prayer. Oftentimes his Aſſiſtance is in a calm, even Way, without remarkable Improvement and Alteration of Frame; ſo that his Operations are not eaſily diſtinguiſh'd from the Operations of our own Faculties, with which they are always in Conjunction, which, it may be, is the more common Caſe of Chriſtians. Sometimes He aſſiſts in a more eminent, *ſenſible* Manner, helps our Infirmities, and makes Interceſſion for us with Groanings, that cannot be utter'd. He elevates the Mind, fixes the Attention, draws out the Affections, and gives that Freedom and Enlargement of Soul, that ſets us quite above ourſelves at other times. And when this more ſpecial Aſſiſtance is afforded, it generally brings its own Evidence along with it; as we are conſcious to, and feel the Acts of our own Minds, ſo we can't but perceive the different Modes of them, all their Improvements and Degrees of Perfection. Nor do I queſtion but ſome devout Perſons know as certainly that God is ſometimes preſent by his Spirit, and at other times abſent, as they know the Sun ſhines, when they ſee its Light, and enjoy its Influence. They know it by inward Perception and Senſation; which though it can't be explain'd to Strangers, is certain to themſelves. Sometimes the Spirit directs to the

Matter of Prayer, not only teaching us in general what Thing we ought, in our ſtated Addreſſes, to pray for; but leading us to inſiſt on particular Bleſſings, as ſpecially adapted to our preſent Caſe; or to ſuch Duties and Difficulties as lye before us in Providence; which, though we do not foreſee, the Interceſſor in the Heart doth, and hereby puts us upon laying in Proviſion againſt the Day of Trial; when we alſo better know the Mind and Meaning of the Spirit in ſuch Excitations, and ſee how ſeaſonable the Importunity was we were led to. If any call this Enthuſiaſm, *&c.* I can bear their Cenſures; but ſhall not be aſham'd to own and plead for what I take to be Matter, not only of certain and ſolid Experience, but of conſiderable Importance, becauſe there are found ſome, that know nothing of ſuch Things, and deſpiſe them.

5thly, The general and common Effect of the Spirit's Aſſiſtance in Prayer, is the acceptable and profitable Performance of the Duty. Without thoſe Graces he's the Author of, we can't pray to any Purpoſe (*i. e.*) without Faith, Humility, Repentance, upright Intention, *&c.* and without the actuating them by his preſent Influence, our Prayers will, in a great Meaſure, be dull and formal, tho' I don't ſay hypocritical, and altogether in vain. The Effect of the higher Aſſiſtance mention'd, is a divine Ability for the Duty, ſolemnity and Seriouſneſs of Frame; inward Comfort, and often holy Joy and Triumph of Soul. This is what good Men, eſpecially the more devout, ſometimes have, but not always. Few or none, I believe, can pretend to it: They are never deſtitute of the Spirit's Help, ſo far as to want all praying Graces in the Habit; but they may want his more ſpecial, immediate Aſſiſtance and Influence; ſo that the Work goes heavily on; their Chariot Wheels

are taken off; they find and feel themſelves under Diſability, in Part; and that they cannot go forth as at other times: And tho' I am far from thinking the Obligation to the Duty now ceaſes, and that they ought not, or need not pray; yet unqueſtionably, whilſt in theſe Circumſtances, the Service will be low and *human*, have little of God in it, and conſequently little Life and Comfort.

How to attain the actual Concurrence and Aſſiſtance of the Spirit, in the diſcharge of the Duty of Prayer: how to preſerve it, improve it, and recover it when loſt, and the like, are Queſtions that well deſerve Conſideration, but muſt not here be medled with. Nor muſt I farther enlarge, but leave theſe Hints with the Reader, which I hope will appear to him of too great Moment to be quite neglected. As we are to pray *always, with all Prayer and Supplication*, ſo always *in the Spirit*, Eph. vi. 18. This we ſhould endeavour: Our Infirmities will be the fewer and leſs, and the leſs prejudicial, if the Spirit help them. Let us look up to God for his Spirit, as for other Purpoſes, ſo to aſſiſt us in our conſtant Devotions; ſupplying us for them, and conducting us through them. The more we depend on the Interceſſor within our own Hearts, and the Interceſſor above, before the Throne, the better we ſhall ſucceed in our Supplications. Let us therefore wait for the Promiſe of the Father, and often plead it, *Luke* xi. 13. *That he will give the holy Spirit to them that ask him.*

I might inforce this Branch of Cloſet Religion with a great many Arguments; but the Reader, that has been tired with ſo many long Diſcourſes already, will excuſe the Omiſſion of them. I muſt refer him to ſuch Authors as profeſſedly, and at large, treat on the Subject; and if he be ſerious and experienc'd, I may refer him to his own Heart,

which can ſay ſo much in Behalf of this Exerciſe, that he will not eaſily be prevail'd with by any Temptations to neglect it.

'Tis a Part of that Homage every reaſonable Creature owes to God; an Expreſſion of our Dependence upon him, and Obligations to him; and as perform'd in *ſecret*, is a direct Acknowledgment of his Omniſcience and Omnipreſence, and thereby gives him the Honour of thoſe Perfections. 'Tis a Law and Duty of natural Religion, ariſing out of the Principle of Nature, and neceſſarily reſulting from the Relation we ſtand in to God, as the Author and Maintainer of our Beings, and the Fountain of all our Comforts; and therefore is not ſo much enacted and appointed in Scripture, as ſuppoſed there; which yet frequently mentions it, and preſcribes Rules concerning it. 'Tis recommended to us by many great and eminent Examples; as that of the Lord and High Prieſt of our Profeſſion, *Luke* vi. 12. *Mark* i. 35; of *David*, Pſal. lv. 17; of *Daniel*, Chap. vi. 10. To which I might add a Cloud of Witneſſes; indeed all that have gone to Heaven, or are in the Way to it: Could we peruſe the Regiſter of the Faithful, from the Beginning of Time, it would be found an eminent Stroke in their Character, *that they were Men of Prayer, and had the Spirit of Supplication.* The Angel, in St. *John*'s Viſion, offer'd *Incenſe with the Prayers of all Saints*, Revelat. viii. 3. *All* the Saints deal in Prayers, and pray *with all Prayer and Supplication*, Eph. vi. 18. ſecret, as well as other kind of Prayer, and generally moſt of all with that. The Principle of divine Life often, *firſt*, exerts itſelf in ſolemn, ſerious Prayer, *Acts* ix. 11. and it conſtantly works the ſame Way, and directs the Eyes upwards to the Throne of God, 'till the Soul is ſafe-

ly lodg'd in Heaven. *The Spirit of Grace* is alſo a Spirit of Supplication, *Zechar.* xii. 10.

I might obſerve, that the Occaſions of the Chriſtian require his conſtant Attendance to this Duty. Some have thought one Reaſon why our Lord, when he pray'd, withdrew from his Diſciples, and prayed *alone*, was becauſe his Caſe and theirs ſo much differed, that the ſame Strain of Devotion would not ſuit both. He had ſome Things to ask, they could not join in; and 'tis likely, ſome Things to ſay it was not fit they ſhould hear; and therefore he retired for Prayer, *Mark* i. 35. *Matt.* xiv. 23. 'Tis ſo with the Chriſtian: He has Neceſſities, Complaints, many Caſes to lay before God, that are not proper for the Cognizance of the deareſt Friends on Earth. Here he may unboſom himſelf with a Fervour and Freedom, that publick Prayer doth not admit of. The Devout know what I mean, and certainly he muſt be but a poor Chriſtian that knows nothing of it. 'Tis one of the moſt neceſſary Inſtruments of Religion; it helps us to uſe our ſpiritual Armour, and contributes not a little to our Succeſs in our Warfare, *Eph.* vi. 18. compared with the Context. It derives Strength and Ability from above, for the Performance of other Duties, and communicates Life and Vigour to them. I reckon it Matter of common Experience among good Men, that they find themſelves more or leſs diſpoſed, and fit for their reſpective Duties and Services, according as their Diligence, Conſtancy, and Seriouſneſs in ſecret Prayer, is more or leſs. No other Prayer, or kind of Devotion can ſupply the Want of this, or indeed well ſubſiſt without it. It opens Heaven, and draws down the choiceſt Bleſſings. The Anſwers of ſecret Prayer, which devout Souls can atteſt, ſome in a common Way, ſome extraordinary, would fill a Volume. To conclude,

clude, 'tis a Means of the pureſt, ſublimeſt Pleaſure, we are capable of in this Life. Thouſands experience this; have that Acceſs to God, and Intercourſe with him in their ſecret Devotions; feel that inward Compoſure, Gladneſs, and Triumph of Soul, eſpecially in their beſt Frames, that all the Gratifications of the Senſualiſt are—— What ſhall I ſay? ſordid and vile compared therewith. 'Tis indeed a Diſgrace to make any Compariſon.

Reader, live no longer a Stranger to thy own trueſt Intereſt, Happineſs and Comfort: Let nothing keep thee out of thy Cloſet, and off thy Knees. Prayer is our beſt Weapon, and greateſt Conſolation in all our Troubles; the Defence and Retreat of the Soul in Time of Danger: *David* found it ſo in the particular Difficulties he complains of, *Pſal.* cix. 4. *For my Love, they are my Adverſaries; but I give myſelf to Prayer.* In ſhort, Prayer is our beſt Employment, ſuitable and neceſſary in every State and Condition, and ſhould have a large Place in our daily, conſtant Devotion. As Praiſe is the predominant, peculiar Work of the Church in Heaven, Prayer ſeems to be ſo of the Church on Earth. Let us therefore attend to it, be ſtedfaſt, and always abound in this Work of the Lord; *enter into* our *Cloſet*, and *pray to* our *Father who is in ſecret, and* our *Father who ſeeth in ſecret, will reward us openly*, Matt. vi. 6.

SECT. XIII.

Of Pſalmody, as a Duty of the Cloſet or Oratory.

5thly, I Know not how to cloſe the Subject about the Duties of Retirement, without mentioning an Exerciſe, which how unuſual ſoever it may be, yet I can't think it unſuitable to the Cloſet, *viz. Pſalmody*. I mean by Pſalmody, *the ſinging* of Pſalms; not aloud, for that can't become Retirement and Secrecy: Nor yet is it merely mental Singing that I intend; but ſinging with the Voice, a low, ſuppreſſed Voice, by which we may go through all the Notes of a Tune with as much Advantage as if we ſung never ſo loud, as any one may be convinced that will make the Experiment. We may either make uſe of the Pſalms of *David*, or Hymns of *Human Compoſure*; or ſometimes the one, and ſometimes the other, as we find the Matter of either moſt ſuitable to our preſent Caſe, Circumſtances and Frame.

The Duty needs no Explication; and as I deſign little more than a bare Propoſal of it, I ſhall neither offer Directions to aſſiſt the Practice of it, nor enlarge on Motives to enforce it. It comes recommended to us by the Example of the firſt Profeſſors of the Chriſtian Religion, and obtained very much at a Time, when the Zeal and Devotion of the Church were warmeſt. We find *Paul* and *Silas* hymnizing and ſolacing themſelves with Pſalmody in ſecret, when a Priſon was their Oratory, *Acts* xvi. 25. Indeed Pſalmody was the great Entertainment

tainment of the Devout in the Primitive Church. Many of them committed the whole Pſalter to Heart; and inſtead of Σαλανικὰς ᾠδὰς, the Devil's Songs, as St. *Chryſoſtom* calls them, ſuch as infect the Mind and Imagination, they employ'd themſelves in reciting ſpiritual Hymns and divine Compoſures, which tended to purify and improve the Mind. *Socrates* * ſaith of *Theodoſius* the younger, that he could exactly repeat the holy Scripture, and that riſing early every Morning, he uſed to ſing Praiſes to God. And *Jerome* ſpeaking of *Bethlehem*, where he lived, and which he ſo much extols in his Letter to *Marcella*, ſaith, you could not go into the Field, but you would hear the Plowman at his Hallelujahs, the Mower at his Hymns, and the Vinedreſſer ſinging *David*'s Pſalms. *Clemens Alexandrinus* recommends Pſalms and Hymns, as proper before we go to Bed. Many more Teſtimonies might be produc'd to the ſame Purpoſe. Pſalmody, ſaith Dr. *Hammond* †, made up a very great Part of the Chriſtian's Devotions, both in the publick Aſſembly, and more privately in the Family, *in their Retirements in the Cloſet*, and in their waking Beds.

* *Cave's* Primitive Chriſtian. *p.* 268.

† Pref. to Paraph. on *Pſal.*

How great the Advantage of the Exerciſe would be, I had rather your Experience ſhould tell you than any Diſcourſe of mine. I have mention'd it with a Deſire, that the Reader would make Trial, if he be yet unacquainted with it. We are exhorted to be filled with the Spirit, *ſpeaking to* our *ſelves in Pſalms, and Hymns, and ſpiritual Songs, making Melody in our Hearts unto the Lord*, Epheſ. v. 18, 19. We ſhould ſpeak to ourſelves, when alone in Pſalms and Hymns, exciting and ſtirring up divine Affections thereby; we ſhould often do it at other Times, and eſpecially in our Oratory making the Exerciſe a ſtated Part of our Devotion, there.

there. We may ſometimes ſing the Pſalm we have been reading, and been beſtowing Reflections upon; or any other Pſalm or Hymn that we think more ſuitable: Nor ſhall we want proper Matter to ſupply our Devotion, when we have been a little accuſtom'd to the Service. The Profit and Pleaſure of it will be exceeding great. It tends to refreſh the Mind in the midſt of other Work; to continue and exalt the Affections already kindled; and to raiſe them if they be flat and low. 'Tis a proper Way of giving Vent to pious Affections, *James* v. 13. and equally uſeful to compoſe and chear, when under Dejection. 'Tis an excellent Means of Intercourſe with God; and, in a Word, a good Preparation for the higher State of Religion above, in which Gratulation and Praiſe is a main Ingredient: But I leave theſe Hints with the Reader without farther arguing. His Practice will be the beſt Application and Improvement of them.

What Place and Order Pſalmody ſhould have in ſecret Devotion, I ſhall not take upon me to determine. Every one here may judge and chuſe as he finds moſt expedient. You may begin with Singing, or end with it; uſe it before or after Reading or Examination, *&c.* varying the Order as you find beſt.

And thus I have gone through the ſeveral Parts of Cloſet Devotion, and have given an Account of the Exerciſes in which we ſhould be employ'd in our Oratory, *viz.* reading the holy Scripture, Meditation, Examination, Prayer, and Pſalmody. It will be thought, it may be, I have been too long upon ſome Heads, and too ſhort upon others; but as this is not the only, nor greateſt Fault in the Performance, I muſt leave all to the Reader's Candour.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Of the Time of Retirement. Whether there be any ſpecial Hours of Devotion that may be reckon'd Sacred; or Canonical Hours: *How often we are to pray,* &c. *Whether we are obliged to go through all the Work that has been mentioned, every Time we retire.*

III. I Proceed to conſider the Times of Retirement, or Seaſons of Cloſet Devotion, when we are to enter into our Oratory and converſe with God in the Manner preſcribed. Concerning which I ſhall remark the following Particulars.

1ſt, I don't apprehend there are any Hours appointed by God for Devotions, and that are *divinely canonical*; no preciſe Hour, or Hours in the Day ſet apart by God for this Service; ſo that 'tis expected from us we ſhould retire at that Time rather than any other; much leſs any ſacred Hours, when our Devotion will be more acceptable than at another Time. The *Jews*, 'tis granted, had their Hours of Prayer. Three of theſe we find mentioned in Scripture. One at the

the third Hour, or nine a-Clock; another at the ſixth Hour, or twelve a-Clock. *Peter*, a *Jewiſh* Convert, who had been uſed to their Times of Devotion, retired to his Oratory at that Hour. *Acts* x. 9. *He went up to the Houſe-top to pray about the ſixth Hour.* Another Hour of Prayer was the Time of their Evening Sacrifice, about three a-Clock in the Afternoon. Peter *and* John *went up to the Temple to pray about the Hour of Prayer, being the ninth Hour*, Acts iii. 1. *David* ſeems to refer to theſe Hours of Devotion in his Practice, *Pſal.* iv. 17. *Evening, Morning, and at Noon will I pray.* As alſo *Daniel*, Chap. vi. 10. "The ancient Cuſtom, ſaith *Druſius*, was to pray "thrice a Day; at the third, ſixth, and ninth "Hour. The third anſwers our nine in the Morn-"ing; the ſixth our twelve at Noon; and the "ninth our three in the Afternoon." Whence *Tertullian* † having premiſed that there is no Time limited, but that *Chriſtians* are at Liberty to pray every where, and at all Times, adds, "Yet theſe "Hours, as they were the moſt remarkable in "human Affairs, dividing the Day, diſtinguiſh-"ing Buſineſs, and made known by publick Sound, "ſo they were the more ſolemn for Devotion.

† Lib. de Jejun. cap. 10.

What the Original, Antiquity, and Reaſon of theſe Hours were, are Queſtions not now to be diſcuſſed. The *Jews* pretended to derive them from the Patriarchs. The third Hour, ſaith *R. Menachem*, was ſet apart by *Abraham*, the ſixth by *Iſaac*, and the ninth by *Jacob*, which I ſuppoſe, ſtands upon the ſame Evidence with many others of their Traditions, *(viz.)* their own Imagination. Nor is it certain what gave Riſe to that Practice. 'Tis probable, two of theſe Prayer-Seaſons were choſe as being the Hours of ſacrificing. The *Jews* uſed to pray towards *Jeruſalem*

lem wherever they were, 1 *Kings* viii. 29, 38, 48. ſo *Daniel*, Chap. vi. 10. And as they prayed towards the ſolemn Place of Worſhip to note, it may be, among other Things, their Acknowledgment of, and Communion with the God that was there worſhipp'd, and with his Worſhippers; ſo they would pray at the Time when a very ſolemn Part of the daily ſtated Worſhip, the Morning and Evening Sacrifice, was performed; looking upon theſe as the *mollia Tempora fandi*, the more auſpicious favourable Seaſons of addreſſing Heaven.

The like Practice was afterwards taken up in the *Chriſtian* Church, from an Humour that pretty early prevail'd, of modelling their Worſhip according to the Manner of the *Jewiſh* Church. We have frequent Mention among the primitive Writers of the Hours of Prayer, which at length were multiply'd and diverſify'd according as their Inclinations led them; ſome making ſix, others ſeven of theſe canonical Hours; which are not only accounted ſacred by the *Romaniſts*, but have been had in Veneration by ſome *Proteſtants*, who have wrote Books to accommodate the Devotion of them. The more common Diſtribution and Order of them is this *, (1) The Mattins, or Morning

* They that would ſee a particular Account of the canonical Hours, may conſult *Johnſon*'s Collection of Eccleſiaſtical Laws, &c. Part 1. the Exceptions of *Ecgbbright*, 23. where the ſeven Synaxes are reckon'd up. "The firſt is the nocturnal Synaxis; the ſecond is at the firſt Hour of the Day; the third is at what we call the third Hour; the fourth, at the ſixth; the fifth, at the ninth; the ſixth Synaxis is in the Evening; the ſeventh we call *compline*. Theſe ſeven Synaxes we ought daily to offer to God with great Concern

Morning Prayer. (2) The Prayer of the third Hour, or nine a-Clock. (3) The ſixth Hour, or twelve a-Clock. (4) The ninth Hour, or three a-Clock. (5) The Veſpers, or Evening Prayer. (6) The *Compliment*, or finiſhing Prayer, to be ſaid juſt before going to Bed. So that they had ſix canonical Hours, or five and a concluding Collect; though indeed it was pretty uſual to make them ſeven.

I need not ſtand to argue with impartial Men, that all this is an arbitrary Service, and can plead no higher Authority than what we call Eccleſiaſtical; nor can I look upon it any thing elſe than one of the common Shifts to keep up ſomething of the Form of Devotion, when the Spirit of it was very much loſt out of the Church. If it be ſaid, the *Jews* had their ſtated canonical Hours; I anſwer, they us'd to pray while their Sacrifices were offer'd, *Luke* i. 10. The People that attended the Temple Worſhip, prayed without at that Time, and they might think it of Advantage to pray at the ſame Time elſewhere; which probably might be one Reaſon of obſerving thoſe Hours. Nor is it any Wonder that ſuch Converts as immediately paſſed out of the *Jewiſh* into the *Chriſtian* Church, ſhould retain the Cuſtom they had been us'd to, as *Peter* and *John*, at leaſt for a Time; but that ſuch Reſtrictions were to continue under

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" Concern for our ſelves, and for all Chriſtian People (as " the Pſalmiſt teſtifies, when he ſaith, *Seven Times a Day* " *will I praiſe thee, becauſe of thy righteous Judgments*) and " not to omit Maſſes, *&c.*" The Tranſlator obſerves theſe Hours were gradually introduc'd; that *Cl. Al.* mentions only the third, ſixth, and ninth Hours; that the Compline was not added till long after. Conſult alſo the Appendix to Dr. *Hickes*'s Letters.

that

that Goſpel we have no Intimation. Dr. *Whitby*'s Remark * is not impertinent here. "As their "(*Peter* and *John*) going to the Temple, is no "Precedent for us *Chriſtians* to perform our pri- "vate Devotions in the Church, which by our "Lord's Directions, we rather are to do *entring* "*into our Cloſets*; God not being ſo preſent in "our Churches, as in a Place of his perpetual "and glorious Reſidence, as he was in the Ta- "bernacle and Temple; ſo neither is their Ob- "ſervation of theſe Hours of Prayer, any War- "rant for our Inſtitution of canonical Hours of "Prayer, much leſs an Evidence that the Apo- "ſtles, by going thither, did inſtitute theſe cano- "nical Hours, as *Baronius* fancies.

* On *Acts* iii. 1.

The Reaſons ſome give for theſe canonical Hours, and particularly for the Number Seven, which many have a very great Fondneſs for, are peculiar; and tho' not very edifying, nor, ſome may think, very ſuitable to my Diſcourſe, yet as they here fall directly in my way, I ſhall inſert them, and that from a *Proteſtant* Miniſter, where they ſtand without any Cenſure, Dr. *Hickes* I mean †. "Con- "cerning the Number of the canonical Hours, "ſaith he, the ſeveral Authors differ who write "about them. Some fix upon the Number three, "dividing the Night and the Day, each of them "into four diſtinct Offices, but the Generality of "the Fathers rather chuſe the Number *Seven*, "grounding their Choice upon the Words of "holy *David*, *Pſal.* cxix. 164. *Seven Times a Day* "*do I praiſe thee becauſe of thy righteous Judgments.* "And that Authority of *David*, who being a "King, and much of his Time taken up in the "regal Adminiſtration, and yet reſerved ſo great "a Part of it for the Service of God, is not the "only Thing urged to give Countenance to this "Number;

† Appendix to his Letters.

" Number; but there are likewiſe ſeveral other " Reaſons alledged from Scripture, as that of the " Prophet *Iſaiah*, Chap. xi. wherein are pointed " out the ſeven Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt. " (1.) The Spirit of Wiſdom. (2.) And Un- " derſtanding. (3.) The Spirit of Counſel. " (4.) And ghoſtly Strength. (5.) The Spirit " of Knowledge. (6.) And Piety. (7.) The " Spirit of an holy and godly Fear. And our " old Adverſary takes unto him ſeven other Spi- " rits wickeder than himſelf, *Mat.* xii. 45. *Luke* " xi. 26. againſt whom we ſhall not be able to " prevail without the *ſevenfold* Grace of the holy " Spirit. Therefore in order to obtain this *ſeven-* " *fold* Grace, the Church has appointed that Men " ſhould offer up a *ſevenfold* Sacrifice of Praiſe " to God. Farthermore, *Prov.* xxiv. 16. 'tis ſaid, " *A juſt Man falleth ſeven Times a Day, and riſeth* " *again.* There are likewiſe *ſeven* deadly Sins and " Abominations, *Prov.* xxvii. 25. Wherefore if a- " ny one would not fall into them, or having " fallen into them would recover himſelf, he muſt " praiſe God, and beg Pardon *ſeven* Times. Our " Saviour has comprehended the Lord's Prayer " in ſeven Petitions, and God Almighty finiſhed " his Works which he created in ſeven Days. " Theſe *ſeven* Hours are alſo ſaid to be repre- " ſented by the ſeven Trumpets, at the Sound " whereof the Walls of *Jericho* fell down, *Joſh.* vi. " and by the *ſeven* Aſperſions or Sprinklings, " *Lev.* xiv. 51. To theſe we may add the ſeven " Stars, ſeven Churches, and ſeven Golden Can- " dleſticks, *Revelat.* i. And in this Point we may " receive farther Information from ſeveral of the " Fathers: As St. *Baſil*, *Gregory Nazianzen*, " St. *Auſtin*, St. *Hierom*, &c." The Reader will excuſe, I hope, this Ramble. I can't but wonder,

der, I confeſs, ſo learn'd a Man ſhould produce ſuch Reaſons to ſupport a Practice he is zealous for, when indeed they only ſerve to diſgrace it. What I am ſaying is, that under the Goſpel there are no particular Hours every Day, ſacred to Devotions; no preciſe Hours in which we are oblig'd to attend the Duties of the Oratory: God has not oblig'd us to any, and Men have no Authority to do it. Here every *Chriſtian* is to be left to his own Liberty and Choice.

2dly, As God has not appointed the preciſe Hours and Time of Devotion every Day, ſo neither has he told us *how often* in the Day we ſhould retire for Devotion. *When thou prayeſt*, ſaith Chriſt, *enter into thy Cloſet*, &c. *Mat.* vi. 6. He doth not ſay *how often* we muſt pray, only requires that *whenever* we pray, we proceed in that Manner. Indeed as to the Time, Length, and other Circumſtances of Devotion, a great deal is left under the Goſpel, to chriſtian Prudence and Zeal. As in the Free-will Offerings under the Law, the Manner of them was regulated, but the Number of them was not determin'd; ſo 'tis with reſpect to the Frequency of our Devotions; 'tis expected and required that we pray, and 'tis appointed how we muſt pray; but *when* and *how often* is not preſcribed. Here our Neceſſities, Occaſions, Love and Zeal muſt give Laws to us. And yet,

3dly, I think the Scripture ſufficiently intimates, that we ſhould be *frequent* in Devotion, particularly in Prayer. This is the leaſt that can be intended by thoſe Texts, wherein we are exhorted to *Pray without ceaſing*, 1 Theſ. v. 17. to *Pray always with all prayer and Supplication*, Epheſ. vi. 18. *Always pray, and not faint*, Luke xviii. 1. *Watch unto Prayer*, 1 Pet. iv. 7. The Meaning is not that Prayer ſhould ingroſs all our Religion, much

leſs all our Time, and by our whole Employment, as is ſaid to have been the Dream of ſome in the primitive Church; but ſurely they muſt import *Frequency*. He that *ſeldom* prays, ſeldom in his Life, ſeldom in the Week, I may add, ſeldom in the Day, can't be thought to fulfill theſe Precepts. How often *preciſely* we are to be in our Oratory engag'd in Devotion, we are not told: But ſo much is certain, that if we regard either our Intereſts and Occaſions, or our Rule, it muſt be often.

4thly, The Scripture not only directs in general to pray *often*, but to pray *daily*. This may very clearly be collected from the Lord's Prayer, which I take to be a Plan of Prayer, deſign'd to inſtruct us in the Matter, Method, and Order of our Deſires and Petitions: And among other Admonitions it affords us touching the Diſcharge of this important Duty, one is, that we are *every Day* to be employ'd in it; for thus it runs,——Give us *this Day* our daily Bread; give us *Day by Day* our daily Bread, *and* forgive us our Treſpaſſes, *&c.* We daily depend on God for outward Subſiſtence and Supplies, and equally for daily Pardon, Support and Defence againſt our ſpiritual Enemies; which we are here taught *every Day* to addreſs our Father in Heaven for. So that he who doth not pray at leaſt *daily*, doth not act as a Diſciple of Chriſt, nor can he juſtly call him Maſter.

5thly, We may farther conclude from Scripture Hints, that we ought to pray not only *daily*, but *twice* every Day. This ſome have thought to be the preciſe Meaning of the Phraſe, *Pray without ceaſing*, 1 Theſ. v. 17. referring to the daily Sacrifice under the Law, which was offer'd Day by Day continually, in the Morning and in the Evening of each Day. "This was called the conti-

"nual

" nual Sacrifice, *Dan.* viii. 11. ſaith a learned Man, " and accordingly is render'd by the *Septuagint* " ἡ Θυσία διαπαντὸς, Dan. viii. 11. Thus the " Mincha * which the High Prieſt offer'd every " Day; part of it in the Morning, and part of " it in the Evening, is ſtil'd by them ἡ Θυσία " διαπαντὸς, Lev. vi. 20. The Burnt-Offering " which was offer'd without Intermiſſion twice " a Day, is in the *Hebrew* עלה תמיד the conti- " nual or never-ceaſing Sacrifice, *Numb.* xxviii. " 24, 31." So that the Scripture requiring us to pray *without ceaſing*, and *always*, muſt be underſtood to intend, according to the known Senſe of the Phraſe, our praying conſtantly every Day, and twice every Day. We are to have our Morning and Evening Sacrifice, and this continually. We ſhould not make nor ſuffer the daily Sacrifice to ceaſe. And methinks, there is ſomething of a natural Fitneſs in it, that we ſhould thus begin and cloſe the Day with God; and ſo often, at leaſt every Day, retire into our Oratory. How reaſonable is it, that in the Morning we ſhould look up to, and adore the Hand that has protected us thro' the Night, committing ourſelves to the Conduct thereof in the Day? And 'tis equally reaſonable we ſhould do the ſame at Night, renew the Day, own the divine Providence in it, and make Acknowledgments anſwerable to our Occaſion. 'Tis a good Thing; it has a Decency, a natural Equity and Comelineſs in it, to give Thank unto the Lord, *to ſhew forth his Loving-kindneſs in the Morning, and his Faithfulneſs every Night*, Pſal. xcii. 1, 2. 'Tis in every reſpect a good Thing, acceptable to God, ſuitable to our Circumſtances, and profitable for us, and therefore ſhould not be neglected by us.

* Whit. in loc.

6thly, I might obſerve that the Examples of good Men, recorded in Scripture, ſeem to carry the Matter higher, and recommend *three Times* as proper to be obſerv'd in the Courſe of daily Devotion. Thus *David*, *Pſal.* lv. 17. *Evening, Morning, and at Noon, will I pray.* And we read of *Daniel*, that *he kneeled upon his Knees three Times a Day, and prayed, and gave Thanks before God*; which, it ſeems, was his Cuſtom and Practice; for 'tis added, *as he did aforetime*, Dan. vi. 10. And no Queſtion the Chriſtian may find his Account in the like Zeal; a ſhort Retirement at Noon, when Circumſtances will admit of it, may be a Repaſt in the Midſt of the Hurries, Buſineſs and Company of the Day; help to revive good Impreſſions made by the Morning Devotion; recover the Mind out of the World; give it a Biaſs and Turn towards divine Objects, and ſo diſpoſe it not only for the remaining Duties of the Day, but for more ſolemn Converſe with God at Night. Thus the Fire of the Altar may be kept in always.

7thly, I would farther ſuggeſt, that as God has not appropriated any particular Hours to Devotion, the Time thereof is left to every one's Diſcretion; (*i. e.*) upon a due Conſideration of our Circumſtances, we are to chuſe that Hour at Night and Morning we judge moſt convenient. At Morning, I reckon it may ordinarily be beſt to prepare for Devotion immediately after we riſe, and not ſuffer any other Buſineſs to intervene. At Night we may be more at Liberty, and ſhould fix upon that Hour which upon Experience we find moſt proper. And it may be beſt, for ſome at leaſt, to keep to their Hour as far as they can, and not be diverted by frivolous Excuſes; tho' I don't think we ſhould be very reſolute in this Matter, much leſs bind ourſelves by ſolemn Promiſes

miſes or Vows; as, that we will ſpend every Night ſuch an Hour, between ſeven and eight, or between eight and nine, in Devotion; this may prove a Snare to us: Several things may fall out, unavoidable Buſineſs, Company, or Indiſpoſition, to render ſuch a Purpoſe impracticable; and therefore 'tis fit to be left more at Liberty, and reſerve Room for Incidents and unforeſeen Impediments, ſtill guarding againſt Slothfulneſs, and all unneceſſary Avocations. It may be well to fix the Time with the Latitude mentioned, and keep as cloſe and ſteddy to it as we can. This will be, as the *Jews* uſed to ſay of ſome of their own Canons, *Septimentum Legis*, a prudent Proviſion againſt the Neglect of that Duty.

I'll only add, 8thly, Beſides the ſtated ordinary Times of Retirement, there are ſpecial Occaſions and Times of *more ſolemn Devotion*. When Chriſt was commiſſioning his Diſciples to the high and difficult Office they were to be employ'd in, he ſpent a whole Night in the προσευχὴ, or Oratory. The Chriſtian will have many of theſe extraordinary Occaſions in the Courſe of his Life; nor will he neglect them if he be duly attentive. A Time of great Trial and Exerciſe is a Time of ſpecial Devotion, *James* v. 13. Prayer then is eminently ſeaſonable and uſeful; as a Means of expreſſing our Dependence on God, Subjection and Reſignation to him; as it tends to compoſe and calm the Mind, and derive Supports and Supplies from above, *&c.* Accordingly it has been the Practice of good Men at ſuch a Time; ſevere Temptations and Trials have ſummon'd them into their Oratories, and brought them to their Knees, *Pſal.* cix. 2, 3, 4. 2 *Cor.* xii. 7, 8. A Time of prevailing Corruption, great Diſorder of Heart and Frame, of Backſliding and Apoſtacy,

Loſs of Strength, Light and Comfort, is alſo a proper Seaſon of extraordinary Prayer. So when we have Matters depending of extraordinary Importance to ourſelves, to others, or to both, we are then called to more than common Devotions; to enter into our Oratory, and continue in it, as Chriſt did, all Night, or all Day; beſpeaking with the utmoſt Importunity his Preſence and Conduct, and committing our Affairs to him. But as this doth not fall within the Compaſs of my preſent Subject, but properly belongs to the extraordinary Work of Retirement, I ſhall not farther enlarge upon it, but conclude this Head with an Enquiry, which ſome may take Occaſion to make from what has been ſaid, *viz.*

Is it neceſſary to go through all the Work that has been preſcribed, every time we retire? as rendring the Scripture, and that with ſuch Reflections as were mentioned, Meditation, Self-Examination, Prayer, and Pſalmody? Can it be expected from the main Body of Chriſtians, that they ſhould have Time and Capacity for ſo much, and ſuch Manner of Work in their conſtant Cloſet Devotion? I anſwer, what has been recommended is deſign'd as a Scheme and Plan of the more perfect Manner of Cloſet Devotion; not expecting that every Chriſtian at all Times ſhould attend the whole of it. But to anſwer more diſtinctly.

I do ſuppoſe there may be ſome ſerious Chriſtians that are not qualified to perform all this Service with any great Profit and Advantage *at any Time*; which is the Caſe of Perſons of no Education, and very mean Parts. They can make little or nothing of Meditation, and expounding Scripture to themſelves, *&c.* ſhould they attempt it: And there needs no other Argument to prove they are not oblig'd to it. We don't ſerve an hard Maſter,

ſter, gathering where he has not ſtrewed: As, *where much is given, much ſhall be required*, Luke xii. 48. ſo conſequently, where little is given, little ſhall be required. The Concluſion from Inability to Non-Obligation is undeniable, ſuppoſing the Inability be not voluntary and acquir'd, owing to Sloth, Negligence, Diſaffection, *&c.* Not but the ſerious Chriſtians of ordinary Parts may perform a great Part of what has been preſcribed. A willing Mind, and a warm Heart, will ſupply many Defects of the Head. We ſhould not haſtily conclude ourſelves unable when we are not; Time and Practice may remove the Difficulties we think inſuperable: Tho' after all, ſome are ſo far unqualified for part of theſe Exerciſes, that I don't think 'em call'd to them. And I am willing to own, they are not the Perſons for whoſe Service this Book is intended.

As there are ſome that can *never* go through all this Work in their Oratories, ſo there are others that can *ſeldom* do it: The one want Capacity, the other want Time; which latter is the Caſe of many Servants, tho' not of all. Some have Time enough to command; their Buſineſs allows them vacant Hours; or they might redeem an Hour from their Beds without Prejudice to their Health. They ſerve Maſters that would not grudge them a little Time for Religion, were they diſpoſed to make good Uſe of it. But others are more ſtraitned; their Buſineſs and ſeverer Maſters * challenge almoſt the whole of the Time they can ſpare out of their Beds; and it can't be expected from theſe that they ſhould daily, or often, perform all the Duties of the Oratory that have been mentioned.

* Who ſeem to look upon Servants only as another Species of Working Cattle.

I add, None are *always* in ſuch Circumſtances as will allow them to go thorough the whole pre-

ſcribed. They may want Time, labour under Indiſpoſition either of Body or Mind, or both. As when upon a Journey, when fatigu'd by Company, Buſineſs, *&c.* which may happen to the moſt Watchful and Devout. And when this is the Caſe, I don't apprehend it their Duty to attempt any more ſolemn Devotion, as Meditation, Examination, *&c.* What lies before them at ſuch a Time, is to commit themſelves to God in a ſerious and ſhort Prayer (at Night we'll ſuppoſe before they go to Bed) and wait a more favourable Opportunity for the reſt. Negative Precepts, as the Schools ſpeak, bind *ad ſemper*; when we are commanded not to ſteal, not to kill or lye, there is no Part of Time wherein theſe Precepts don't oblige. But poſitive Precepts are of a different Nature: When we are bid to pray, meditate, commune with our Hearts, *&c.* the Meaning is not, that we are to be *always* employ'd in ſuch Duties, but at the proper Times and Seaſons thereof.

But tho' there are ſome that can *never* go thro' all this *Work*, others that can *ſeldom*, and none that can *always* do it; yet I doubt not there are great Numbers of Chriſtians that may *often* attend the whole of it ordinarily *once every Day*, if it be not their own Fault. One Hour might ſuffice for all the Purpoſes of Devotion, according to the Plan propoſed: And certainly they muſt be able to give a better Account of their Time, than I am afraid moſt can, that may juſtly plead they can't ſpare ſo much from more neceſſary important Buſineſs, for the Duties of the Cloſet. I before mentioned the Practice of a good Man, that uſed to divide the twenty four Hours of each Day into three Parts, allowing eight Hours for Refreſhment; Eating, Sleep, *&c.* eight Hours for the Buſineſs

of

of his particular Calling, and eight Hours for Devotion. If this be more than the Leiſure of ſome will permit, and what the Zeal of few will riſe up to, yet methinks one Hour in twenty four is but a ſmall Proportion of our Time. 'Tis paſt Queſtion, moſt of us might ſpare ſo much Time *ordinarily every Day*, for the Oratory, without intrenching upon any neceſſary Buſineſs: Nor ſhall we be found acting a reaſonable Part, ſuch as will ſtand the Examination of our own Conſciences, to ſay nothing of the Tribunal of God, if we refuſe it. What! have we 24 Hours every Day to ſpend and to account for? And ſhall we not redeem one of them for the Oratory! not one ſerious Hour in 24! If two Hours were ſpent in the Cloſet, there is 22 for the reſt; and ſhall we grudge ſo ſmall a Portion of our Time for ſuch Work? Work ſo important, ſo profitable, ſo neceſſary!

But after all, that I may accommodate the Diſcourſe as much as poſſible, to the Occaſions, and even Infirmities of Men, I would come lower; if it ſhould be thought, that the daily Courſe and Obſervation of all theſe Duties would exceed, either the Leiſure or Zeal of the moſt, I propoſe it may be attended *ſometimes*. For Inſtance, *twice a Week*; on *Wedneſday* or *Thurſday* Night, and on *Lord's-Day* Night; oftener it may be done by the Generality of Chriſtians; it would be well to reſolve that *ſo often, at leaſt*, it ſhall be attended by all of us. The Lord's-Day is ſacred Time, ſet apart for the Work of our Souls and another World; when we ſhould diſmiſs the World, and, *vacare Deo*, eſſay the Life of Heaven. The very Heathens thought the Deſign of their Feſtivals was τὸν νῶν ἀπάγειν ἀπὸ τῶν ἀνθρωπινῶν ἀσχολημάτων, to withdraw the Mind from ſecular and human Buſineſs, that it might be turned πρὸς τὸ θεῖον,

to

to Subjects divine and ſpiritual; the ſolemn Pauſe of a Sabbath, or Day of holy Reſt, ſhould be thus improved, and conſequently will not only admit of and take in ſuch Work as I have been deſcribing, but ſeems to require it: We ſhould every Lord's-Day ſpend a conſiderable Time in our Oratories, reading, examining, meditating, *&c.* an Hour or two may be well employ'd in ſuch Exerciſes, and may be reckon'd due to them. I alſo propoſe that ſome Time be ſet apart for the ſame Work, on another Evening in the Week; ſuppoſe *Wedneſday*, or *Thurſday*. Many may be more frequent, that none ſhould be leſs frequent, is what I am now inſiſting upon.

It can't, with any Modeſty, be pretended, that this would draw too great a Burden upon us. Methinks there is ſomething ſo ſhocking in ſuch an Objection, that no Chriſtian ſhould know how to come into it. Two Hours, twice a Week, too much for ſolemn Devotion! for Converſe with God, reviſing and ſettling the Affairs of our Souls! too much for Chriſtians that believe Eternity, and profeſs to make Religion their Buſineſs! There are in a Week 168 Hours. The Thing now pleaded is that three or four of theſe be appropriated to the more ſolemn Duties of the Cloſet. And ſhall this be eſteem'd too much? too much Time, too much Labour! What wretched Stupidity and Unthoughtfulneſs; how little Value for our Souls and another World, muſt ſuch a Pretence imply? Was the Thing required of us, to roll a Stone up an Hill, to ſerve as Slaves in a Galley, or dig in a Mine Months, or Years; there might be ſomething in the Averſion: But 'tis to converſe with Heaven, improve our Minds, and refreſh ourſelves in the divine Preſence, *&c.* And ſhall two or three Hours

in

in 168 be thought too great a Proportion of our Time to be thus employ'd!

Let us briefly view the Work in the whole Compaſs of it, and ſee what there is in it that is burdenſom, and diſcouraging. In the Morning, after a few ſerious Thoughts and Ejaculations, when riſing, dreſſing, *&c.* a Chapter is read, and then follows Prayer, in which ſome will continue a Quarter of an Hour; ſome half an Hour, others more (I ſay nothing of the Devotion at Noon, or any occaſional Devotion in the Day; and of pious Ejaculations which may attend any Buſineſs, Company or Place.) At Night ſome Review is ordinarily made of the Day, in the Manner before explain'd. Then a Chapter is read, with ſuch Remarks as more eaſily occur to the Worſhipper; and the whole cloſed with Prayer. This is the more ſtated, ordinary Courſe of the Chriſtian's Devotion, with ſuch Variations, as accidental Circumſtances call for. Twice a Week, on the Lord's-Day Night, and ſome other Night an Hour or two is appointed for the Service of the Oratory; in which a Chapter is read, with Reflections, as before directed: Or a Meditation attempted on a particular Subject; it may be upon a Sermon that Day, or lately heard. Then an Examination is made of Heart, Conduct, Frame, *&c.* for that Day, or ſome Days paſt. Then a Pſalm or Hymn is ſung, and ſolemn Prayer concludes the Exerciſe. I don't pretend to preſcribe the preciſe Order of theſe Duties, any more than the Length of them. I only mention how they *may* be, not ſaying how they *muſt*. And what is there in all this, to be thought tedious and burdenſom? It requires no great Time; an Hour or two at the moſt will be enough to diſpatch the whole of it. One Hour in the daily ordinary Devotion, two Hours twice a Week

a Week for the more ſolemn Devotion, and the ſeveral particular Exerciſes preſcribed, will anſwer all I am pleading for: That is nine Hours in the Week. *Nine Hours out of* 168! I am forced to be thus particular, not only to explain, but to apologize for a Method of Devotion that may ſeem a little out of the Way; and that not only the profane and atheiſtical will contemn, but the Lovers of Eaſe and Pleaſure, that are more accuſtom'd to Clubs than Devotion, may boggle at. This, Chriſtian, is the Service I would engage thee in. If thou canſt ſay, truly ſay, and wilt maintain it; that thou haſt not Time for it, canſt not ſpare ſo many Hours in the Week from higher and greater Things; that thou beſtoweſt thy Time every Evening in better, and more neceſſary Employment; that the Work preſcribed will not quit the Coſt, is not of ſo great Moment as to deſerve ſo much Care and Self-Denial, *thou may'ſt neglect it*; if not, it demands thy Attention; and ſo I leave it to thy Conſcience and the Teaching of Heaven, without farther Expoſtulation.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Containing ſeveral Propoſitions, evidencing our Obligations to worſhip God in Retirement.

IV. I Have already in ſome Meaſure, diſcharged this Part of my Undertaking, under each of the Heads which have been inſiſted upon; as reading the Scripture, Meditation Examination, *&c.* And therefore ſhall here only conſider the Duty *in general*, worſhipping God in our Oratories, or Cloſets; and offer ſome Arguments to prove an Obligation upon us to do this; *to retire and converſe with God in ſecret.* The Subject is ſomewhat nice and abſtruſe, and would lead to a greater Compaſs of Speculation, was it to be fully conſider'd, than may at preſent be allow'd, having ſo much exceeded in ſome former Branches of my Diſcourſe. I ſhall reduce what I think proper to ſay within a little Room, and under the following Propoſitions.

1ſt, ſomething of Religion ſeems eſſential to the human Species, and inſeparable from the Nature of Man. Man is *animale Religioſum*; thus ſome have defin'd him. *A Creature capable of Religion*; making Religion, rather than bare Reaſon, his eſſential Difference

ference and Diſtinction from the lower Creatures.

" The Eſſence of Man (to expreſs myſelf in the Words of a good * Divine) " may be ſaid to con-
" ſiſt in Religion. There are, diſcernible in the
" Actions of many brute Creatures, ſome Foot-
" ſteps, ſome imperfect Strictures and Degrees of
" Ratiocination; ſuch a natural Sagacity, as at leaſt
" bears a near Reſemblance to Reaſon: From whence
" it may follow, that it is not Reaſon in general
" which is the Form of human Nature; but Rea-
" ſon as it is determin'd to Actions of Religion,
" of which we do not find the leaſt Signs or De-
" grees in Brutes: Man being the only Creature
" in this viſible World, that is form'd with a Ca-
" pacity of worſhipping and enjoying his Maker.
" Nor is this any new Opinion, but what ſeveral
" of the ancient Writers, Philoſophers, Orators
" and Poets have atteſted too; who make the No-
" tion of a Deity, and Adoration of him, to be
" the true Difference between Man and Beaſt. So
" †*Tully*; *Ex tot generibus nullum eſt animal præter*
" *hominem*, &c. Among all the living Creatures
" there are in the World, there is none but Man
" that hath any Notion of a Deity; and among
" Mankind there is no Nation ſo wild and barba-
" rous, but pretends to ſome Religion; whence it
" ſhould ſeem this is the moſt proper Difference
" between Man and Beaſts. And in another Place,
" he makes this to be the Character of that Rea-
" ſon, which is the Form of Man, that it is *vin-*
" *culum Dei & hominis*, which imports both Name
" and Thing.

" Of the ſame Senſe is that of the *Satyriſt*,
" who ſpeaking of Religion, and a Senſe of di-
" vine Things, ſaith this of it.

* Biſhop *Wilkins* of Nat. Relig. *p.* 288.

† De Leg. lib. 1.

——" *Separat*

——" *Separat hoc nos*
" *A grege mutorum, atque ideo ventrabile ſoli*
" *Sortiti ingenium divinorumq; capaces.*

" 'Tis this, ſaith he, which doth diſtinguiſh us " from brute Creatures, that we have Souls capa- " ble of divine Impreſſions. There are abundance " of Expreſſions to this Purpoſe in ſeveral other of " the Heathen Writers. That of * *Plutarch*, where " he ſtyles Irreligion a kind of *Stupor*, whereby " Men are, as it were, deprived of their Senſes. " And in another Place he aſſerts it to be an exceed- " ing improper Thing to aſcribe true Reaſon to thoſe " who do not acknowledge, and adore the Deity. " So again, † *Tully*, *quis hunc hominem dixerit*, &c. " Why ſhould any one ſtyle ſuch an one a Man, " who by what he ſees in the World, is not con- " vinced of a Deity, and of a Providence, and of " the Adoration due to a Deity. *Non modo* " *non philoſophos, ſed nec homines quidem fuiſſe dixi-* " *rim* (ſaith another †) Men that are deſtitute of " Religion, are ſo far from being learned Philoſo- " phers, that they ought not to be eſteem'd ſo " much as reaſonable Men.

* De ſuperſtitione.

† Nat. Deor.

† Lactantius.

I know 'tis common for thoſe that diſcard Religion, and ſet it at Defiance, to pride themſelves in their Wit, and boaſt of their Reaſon; but their Boaſts are vain. They are ſo far from being the only, or great Men of Reaſon, as they would be thought, that in Reality, whilſt they want Religion, they forfeit all Pretence to Reaſon. They have a ſort of Reaſon, it's granted, and ſo have the Brutes. A Spaniel, Monkey, and Baboon can do Feats; can ſport and play, eat, drink, and propagate their Kind: And though the Reaſon of theſe Men reaches farther, and riſes ſomewhat high-

er; yet, whilſt it doth not lead them to God, but ſtops ſhort of Religion, it can't be call'd the divine Reaſon, which is the Diſtinction of a ſuperior Species and Order * of Creatures: Nor can I ſee but the Soul of ſome of the more ſagacious Brutes, in a Body organized, as the human Body is, might ſerve moſt of the Purpoſes the Perſons, I am ſpeaking of, live for. In ſhort, Reaſon, as 'tis the Characteriſtick of Man, is in Conjunction with Religion; 'tis a Ray of Divinity, and will direct the Mind upward, and tend to its Original, if it be not ſuppreſſed or extinguiſh'd. And where it's without this Tendency, and deſtitute of Religion, it muſt be look'd upon as having degenerated into ſenſual and brutiſh; leaving the Poſſeſſor in the Claſſis of the Brutes; for though he retain the Name, the erect Figure and outward Shape of Man, he has put off the Nature, and wants the inward Principle and Form of Man.

* *Sanctius his Animal*, &c.

2dly, As Religion is eſſential to Man, acting as ſuch, and according to the Conſtitution and Frame of his Nature, ſo divine Worſhip is eſſential to Religion, and conſequently eſſential to Man as a religious Creature. Every reaſonable Creature is bound to worſhip, eſteem, love, ſerve, and adore the Supreme Being. The Obligation to this might be demonſtrated. There is a Sort of Honour and Reſpect due to every Being, according to the Meaſure of Excellency it is poſſeſſed of. Where there is great Power, with great Wiſdom and Goodneſs, and theſe diſplay'd in numerous, conſtant Inſtances, a proportionable Deference and Worſhip becomes due. We owe Love and Honour to a wiſe and ood Man, one of eminent Accompliſhments and Character; more to an Angel; and ſtill more and more, as any Being is diſtinguiſhed and advanced in the Scale of Perfection. Now as God has

all poſſible Perfections, all Excellencies, and in the higheſt Degree, Worſhip, divine ſupreme Worſhip (which properly lies in agnizing, and acknowledging theſe Perfections with ſuitable Devotion) is due to him, from every Being capable of diſcerning them, and to whom they are made known.

And this is the more due, and the Obligation to it confirm'd, when that Being is God's Creature; deriving all its Power and Capacities from him, and ſubſiſting by his Care; which is the Caſe of Man. *In him we live, and move, and are.* Our Beings are from him; he furniſh'd us with our Faculties; he ſuſtains us every Moment, and by his Viſitation upholds our Spirit. He ſupplies all our Wants, beſtows all our Comforts, and performs all Things for us. In ſhort, he's not only the greateſt and beſt of Beings, but our Maker, Preſerver, and conſtant Benefactor, from whence reſults an undeniable Obligation to acknowledge and worſhip him. *Let us worſhip and bow down,* ſaith the *Pſalmiſt; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker,* Pſal. xcv. 6. So *Pſal.* c. *He hath made us*; it follows, *Enter into his Gates with Thankſgiving, and into his Courts with Praiſe, be thankful unto him, and bleſs his Name,* ver. 3. 4. As he has made us, he has an undoubted Right to our Homage and Worſhip. Accordingly, we find he challenges it, upon Principles of common Equity, and ſuch as are allow'd univerſally, among Mankind, in the Relations they ſtand in one to another, *Mal.* i. 6. *A Son honoureth his Father, and a Servant his Maſter: If then I be a Father, where is my Honour? and if I be a Maſter, where is my Fear?*

So that to worſhip God, to own his Providence, celebrate his Perfections, expreſs our Dependence upon him, pray to him in our Wants, give him Praiſe for his Benefits, and pay him all ſuitable Ho-

mage, is a neceſſary Duty ariſing out of the Nature of Things; the Obligation to which can never ceaſe, whilſt Things continue as they are between God and Man: That is, while God continues what he is. A Being of abſolute Perfection; the Creator, ſovereign Governour, and conſtant Benefactor of the World: And while Man continues what he is, God's Creature, deriving all from him, and always depending upon him. And hence it may be it is, that we have no more expreſs Inſtitution and Appointment of divine Worſhip in its ſeveral Kinds in Scripture. The Bible rather ſuppoſes than commands it; refers to it as a known, confeſſed Thing; known, *a priori*, antecedently to ſupernatural Revelation, as being Part of νόμῳ ἐμψυχῳ, the internal Law, written in the Heart, and legible to all. In ſhort, to worſhip God is the Duty of every reaſonable Creature, natural, neceſſary, and unchangeable, and known by the Light of Reaſon.

3dly, Not only Worſhip, in general, but *ſecret* Worſhip may be conſider'd as a neceſſary Duty of every reaſonable Creature; the Obligation to which may alſo be evinced from the Light of Nature, and Principles of Reaſon. It not only has peculiar Advantages, as it affords greater Liberty for particular Perſons to tranſact with God their particular, ſpecial Affairs; to lay before him their perſonal Grievances, Complaints and Wants, and inſiſt on Caſes proper to themſelves, after another Manner than can be done in ſocial Worſhip, which is a Circumſtance that doth not a little recommend it; but it alſo tends to the Honour of God in a ſpecial Manner; it gives him the Glory of ſome of his Attributes, of his Omnipreſence and Omniſcience, for Inſtance, more than publick Worſhip doth: Hereby we acknowledge that *he ſees in ſecret*: Here-

by also we own his Providence, not only in general, but in particular; that he takes Care of Individuals, intereſts himſelf in our Matters, and declares our Dependance upon him, and Obligations to him in particular. In ſocial, publick Worſhip, we celebrate him as *a common* Benefactor; in ſecret Worſhip, we own ſpecial Obligations. Not to ſay that ſecret Worſhip carries in it, at leaſt, a greater Appearance of Sincerity, than ſocial. A Perſon may join in publick Aſſemblies upon Motives that have nothing of God and Religion in them; but when he addreſſes himſelf to God in Retirement, there is leſs Temptation to act a Part, and play the Hypocrite: The Buſineſs is now off the Theater, and carried on in a Manner that implies, one would think, (though 'tis granted Hypocriſy may creep in here) a real Conviction of the divine Preſence, Providence and Government, and of the Worſhipper's Dependence, *&c.* So that there ſeems to be ſomething in the Circumſtance of this ſort of Worſhip *as ſecret*, that inforces the Obligation of it. Every one, as he has his private, particular Wants, Bleſſings, and various diſtinct Caſes, ought to carry theſe before God, and worſhip in ſecret.

4thly, Though the Scripture, as I ſaid, rather ſuppoſes ſecret Worſhip a Duty, than expreſly inſtitutes it, yet the Mention it makes of it, the Rules it lays down for the Diſcharge of it, not only imply, but confirm our Obligation to it. The Reader, that is acquainted with his Bible, and with the Subject, knows how much it inſiſts on the Duties of Worſhip, Prayer, Praiſe, *&c.* It gives ſeveral Hints concerning the Frequency of theſe Duties, particularly of Prayer; as, that we *pray without ceaſing*, 1 Theſſ. v. 17. *Pray always, with all Prayer and Supplication*, Epheſ. vi. 18. It recom-

mends the Duty in general, *that Men pray every where, lifting up holy Hands, without Wrath and Doubting*, 1 Tim. ii. 8. Chriſt requires of his Diſciples, that they *enter into their Cloſet, and pray to their Father in ſecret*, Mat. vi. 6. It gives many Directions for the Management of Devotion. The Book of *Pſalms* abounds with Precepts, Rules and Examples, relating to Prayer, Praiſe, and Meditation, and is indeed moſtly a Collection of the Materials of ſecret Devotion. It intimates the Neceſſity of ſuch Exerciſes, and makes the Neglect of them the Character of Hypocrites and the Ungodly, *Job* xv. 4. *Job* xxvii. 10. *Pſal.* x. 4. *Pſal.* xiv. 4. *Jer.* x. 25. In ſhort, the Bible is full of the Subject (ſecret Devotion) of Precepts, Rules, Motives relating to it; ſo that if we regard either the Voice of Nature or Scripture, we muſt receive it as a Duty. He that has no Oratory, and is not a Man of Devotion, at once violates the Principles of his own Mind and Conſcience, and deſpiſes the Authority of God in his Word.

5thly, So full is the Evidence of this Duty (of converſing with God in ſecret) and ſo general the Conviction of it, that it appears to have been the conſtant Practice of the Church of God, and of all the ſincere, genuine Members of it, in every Age of the World. Indeed the Hiſtory of the firſt Ages of the Church, for ſome thouſand Years, is tranſmitted to us in ſuch ſhort Memoirs and general Hints, that no diſtinct Account of their private Devotion can be expected: but ſo much is ſaid of them, as gives us reaſon to conclude, that all the Faithful, all good Men, were then, as ever ſince, Men of Devotion. *Adam*, no queſtion, was often employ'd in converſing with God, during his Innocency, as may be probably inferr'd from what he ſaith, *Gen.* iii. 10. *I heard thy Voice in the Garden*,

Garden, and was afraid, and hid myſelf. He had been accuſtom'd to the Voice of God; having, it's likely, had frequent Intercourſe with him. He had been uſed to hear from God (and, no doubt, ſpeak to him) and therefore knew his Voice as ſoon as he heard it. Nor can we queſtion but *Abel*, *Seth*, *Enoch*, *Noah*, and other pious Men of that Time, enjoy'd the like Privilege; eſpecially when 'tis ſaid of ſome of them, particularly of *Enoch* and *Noah*, *that they walked with God*; which certainly muſt imply *mutual Converſe*; gracious Vouchſafements on God's Part, and much Devotion on theirs. *Abraham*, that is ſo much diſtinguiſh'd in the Annals of the Church, and repreſented as the Father of the Faithful, was a Perſon of Devotion. He maintain'd frequent Intercourſe with Heaven, *Gen. Chap.* xv. *Chap.* xvii. In the third Verſe, we find him on his Face, and God talking with him. He intercedes for *Sodom*, *Chap.* xviii. 23. and for *Abimelech*, *Chap.* xx. 17. If it be objected theſe are rather Inſtances of occaſional than conſtant Devotion: We read afterwards, that when he had got ſome little Settlement at *Beerſheba*, he immediately prepared himſelf an Oratory for *ſtated* Devotion, as is probable. *Abraham planted a Grove in Beerſheba, and there he called upon the Name of the Lord, the Everlaſting God*, Gen. xxi. 33. It ſeems to have been a Sort of a *Proſeuche*, or Place for retired Worſhip. There *Abraham called upon God*, and ſpent many Hours, no doubt, in ſolemn Devotion: And it would ſeem that ſeveral Members of his Family were train'd up to Devotion; ſomething of this may be inferr'd from the Behaviour of his Servant *Eleazar*, upon a particular Occaſion, *Gen.* xxiv. 12. *&c.* He addreſſes himſelf to God like one that was no Stranger to ſuch Employment. So *Iſaac*, Gen. xxiv. 63. 'Tis ſaid he *went out to meditate* (or

pray, and 'tis likely to do both) *in the Field at the Even-tide:* He ſpent Part of his Evenings in Meditation and Prayer, which we may ſuppoſe was his common Practice. And how like a Man of Religion and Devotion was that we read of, *Gen.* xxv. 21. *Iſaac intreated the Lord for his Wife, becauſe ſhe was barren; and the Lord was intreated of him.* The ſame Spirit of Devotion appears in *Jacob*; witneſs what paſſed at *Bethel*, *Gen.* xxviii. 16. to the End; at *Mahanaim*, *Gen.* xxxii. 9,——13. With how much Strength and Skill doth he plead with God? In 24 and 26th Verſes, we find him alone wreſtling with the Angel: 'Tis plain, how much ſoever the Body might be concern'd, the Mind was alſo in the Conflict; he wreſtled for a Bleſſing, *ver.* 26. and how he wreſtled the Prophet tells us, *Hoſ.* xii. 4. *He wept, and made Supplication to him.* "The Patriarch, ſaith "*Monſ.* * *Sawrin*, after having taken the Steps "Prudence ſuggeſted to him for his Safety, was "deſirous to ſpend a few Moments in Retirement, "perhaps to recollect his Thoughts, and betake "himſelf once again to Prayer. In theſe holy "Exerciſes God communicates himſelf to the "Soul after the moſt intimate Manner; and in "ſuch he gave the antient Patriarchs the moſt ſenſible Marks of his Preſence, and of his Love." It ſeems he did ſo to *Jacob* on this Occaſion, in a very eminent Manner. Hence both the Supplicant and Place receive a new Name, not a little honourable. *Jacob* is call'd *Iſrael*, and *Jabbock* is called PENIEL, *i. e.* the Face of God; for, ſaith he, *I have ſeen God Face to Face*, ver. 30. Glorious was the Combat in which the poor weeping Supplicant becomes a Conqueror, and, as a Prince, has Power with God and prevails. No doubt the good Man would remember *Peniel* as long as he lived,

* Diſſertat. on N. T. *p.* 241.

ved, and often deſire to ſee the Face of God in the like Exerciſes. And what ſhall I more ſay? for the Time would fail me to tell of *Noah*, *Job*, *Daniel*, of *David*, of *Samuel* alſo, and of the Prophets: Some of theſe the Scripture diſtinguiſhes as Perſons of more than ordinary Piety and Devotion; as *Noah*, *Daniel* and *Job*, Ezek. xiv. 14. *Moſes* and *Samuel*, Jer. xv. 1. And though we have but a few Sketches, ſhort Memoirs of their Religion, yet ſo much is ſaid of them, as ſhews they were Perſons of great Eminency, particularly for Devotion.

Noah has this Character, that *he walked with God.* *Daniel* was a ſpecial Favourite of God; had not only extraordinary Intimacy with God in Prayer, but ſignal Anſwers of Prayer; was admitted into the ſecret Counſel of Heaven, *Dan.* ii. 17, 18, 19. had an Angel ſent him, to give him Aſſurance that his Prayer was accepted, and that he was a Perſon greatly beloved, *Chap.* ix. 20, 21, 22, 23. And beſides his extraordinary Devotions, he had his ſtated Periods thereof *three Times a Day*; which he attended with a Reſolution that no Dangers could divert him from. When he knew that the Decree *was ſigned, he went into his Houſe, and his Windows being open towards* Jeruſalem, *he kneeled upon his Knees three Times a Day, and prayed, and gave Thanks before his God, as he did aforetime*, Dan. vi. 10. No Terrors could make him omit his Devotion, nor change the Courſe and Method of it. And one may infer *Job*'s Eminency in this Duty, as from other Paſſages in his Book, ſo particularly from this, that God himſelf appoints and accepts him as an Advocate for his Friends. *My Wrath*, ſaith the Lord to *Eliphaz*, *is kindled againſt thee, and againſt thy two Friends*; *therefore take unto you ſeven Bullocks, and ſeven Rams, and go to my Ser-*

vant Job, *and my Servant* Job *ſhall pray for you, for him will I accept,* Job xlii. 7, 8. Which was an high Honour put upon this holy Man, and imports not only his great Intereſt in God, but Eminency in Prayer. And how powerful an Interceſſor with God was *Moſes?* Let the Reader conſult the following Texts for a Proof of this, *Exod. Chap.* viii. 12, 30. *Chap.* ix. 33. *Chap.* x. 18. *Chap.* xiv. 15. *Chap.* xv. 25. *Chap.* xxxii. 10, 30, 31. *Let me alone,* ſaith God, *that my Wrath may wax hot againſt them, and that I may conſume them, Chap.* xxxiv. 9. *Numb.* xiv. 13. *Samuel* is alſo mentioned among theſe Worthies, and that deſervedly, 1 *Sam. Chap.* viii. 6, 7, 8, &c. *Chap.* xii. 18, 23.

And the ſame might be obſerved of *David.* The Book of Pſalms is full of his private Devotions. Indeed almoſt every Providence brought him into his Oratory; as every Place was a Sort of Oratory to him; *Adullam, Engedi, Mezar, Olivet, Maon.* He was conſtant and frequent therein. *In the Morning, Pſal.* v. 3. *Pſal.* lix. 16. *Pſal.* lxxxviii. 13. *At Evening, and at Noon, Pſal.* lv. 17. He lived in Devotion, *Pſal.* cxix. 164. *Pſal.* cix. 4. *Pſal.* xxxiv. 1. and, as it were, expired in it, 2 *Sam.* xxiii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. In ſhort, this has been the Temper of all good Men, more or leſs, *Joſh.* vii. 7, 8, 9. 1 *Sam.* i. 10, 11. 1 *Kings* v. 17. *James* v. 17, 18. *Nehem.* i. 4. *Eſther* iv. 3, 16, *&c.* Devotion is inſeparable from the true Church, and real Members of it: *God inhabiteth the Praiſes of* Iſrael, *Pſal.* xxii. 3. Is the *God that heareth Prayer, to whom all Fleſh ſhall come. Pſal.* lxv. 2. 'Tis mentioned as part of the Character of the pious *Jews,* that they were Men of Prayer, *Pſal.* xxiv. 6. *This is the Generation of them that ſeek thy Face, O God of* Jacob. That Generation he had deſcribed, who ſhall aſcend into

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to the Hill of the Lord, and who have clean Hands, and a pure Heart; all of them are *Seekers of God*, as *Jacob* was: They are *Iſraelites*, Men of Worſhip and Devotion. And 'tis obſervable that the Proſelytes, ſuch as were ſerious among them, walked in the ſame Steps, and in the ſame Spirit. Thus we read of *Cornelius*, that he was a devout Man, *and prayed alway*, Acts x. 2. He had his ſtated, and alſo his extraordinary Hours of Prayer, when he joyned Faſting with Prayer, *ver.* 30. This was to act like a genuine Member of the Church; one that not only embraced the Profeſſion, but was initiated into the Religion of the Church.

And ſhould I go on to conſider the Character, the Temper and Practice of the Members of the Chriſtian Church, we ſhould find them all under the ſame Biaſs and Bent of Mind towards God and Devotion: *Behold he prayeth*, ſaith the Lord to *Ananias*, concerning *Saul* the Perſecutor, now a Convert; and the ſame may be obſerved of every true Convert in the World. Particular Inſtances here are needleſs; we are compaſſed about with a Cloud of Witneſſes. I appeal to the whole Community of the Faithful in this Matter; tho' all are not alike devout, yet all know ſomething of Devotion, and live in the Exerciſe of it. Chriſt ſuppoſes his Diſciples would pray, and therefore gives them Rules for the Performance of the Duty, *Mat.* vi. 6. and the Apoſtle makes it part of the Deſcription of Chriſtians, *that they call upon the Name of Jeſus Chriſt our Lord*, 1 Cor. i. 2. Chriſtians are Men of Prayer and Devotion; always were ſo, and always will be ſo to the End of the World. The New Teſtament affords us ſuch Hints as will warrant us to conclude this concerning them; and the Hiſtory of the Church confirms it. Devo-

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tion has ever been an eminent Part of the Character of the Chriſtian Church, in which ſome have exceeded. *Euſebius* ſaith of *James* the Juſt, that his Knees became hard and brawny by frequent Devotion; and the ſame *Nazianzen* notes of his Siſter *Gorgonia*. The Hiſtorian ſaith of *Conſtantine* the Emperor, that tho' he was burden'd with the Cares of ſo vaſt an Empire, yet he would every Day, at his wonted Hours, retire into his Cloſet, and upon his Knees offer up his Prayers to God. And to manifeſt to the World that he was not aſham'd of his Duty, and let them know what it was he chiefly delighted in, he cauſed his Image in all his gold Coins, Pictures and Statues, to be repreſented in the Poſture of a Perſon praying, with his Hands ſpread abroad, and his Eyes lifted up towards Heaven. 'Tis ſaid of him, that he accounted it a greater Honour to be a Member of the Church, than Head of the Empire: And how like ſuch an one doth he ſeem whilſt in this Poſture? But I need not produce particular Inſtances in a Caſe I ſuppoſe general. The Argument is, that what has been the Practice of the Church of God in all Ages of the World, muſt be look'd upon as Matter of Duty to all the Members of the Church. Man is a religious, a worſhipping Creature; ſo by the Frame and Conſtitution of his Mind; all the Faithful have been more or leſs Perſons of Devotion; conſequently ſuch as are Strangers to it, and live without it, have no Reaſon to reckon themſelves of the Number.

Cave's Primitive Chriſtians, Part I. p. 267.

6thly, As the Members of the Church have from Age to Age lived in Devotion, and maintained Intercourſe with God, ſo the glorious Head of the Church the Son of God, when he came into the World, was an eminent Example of Devotion, of ſecret Devotion. He often withdrew from

from Company, and from his Diſciples, and pray'd alone: When he had ſent the Multitude away, he went up into a Mountain apart to pray, ſaith *Matthew* Chap. xiv. 23. So Chap. xxvi. 36—45. He withdrew himſelf into the Wilderneſs, and prayed, *Luke* v. 16. *Mark* tells us, that in the Morning, riſing up a great while before Day, he departed into a ſolitary Place, and there prayed, Ch. i. 35. And in the Text 'tis ſaid, *he went out into a Mountain to pray, and continued all Night in the Oratory of God*, Luke vi. 12. He had his Hands full of Work all Day, of religious Work, divine Work; but that doth not excuſe him from the Duties of Retirement. At one time he's up all Night in his Oratory; at another time he riſes a great while before Day to get into it; he would rather want Time for Sleep, than Prayer. And how loud an Admonition is this to us? How great a Conviction of the Obligation of the Duty? If it be ſaid he had more difficult Work to go through, than we: I anſwer he had a proportionable Unction and Ability; a more conſtant habitual Fitneſs for any Service: He was call'd, tho' he had no Corruptions or Diſorders of Frame; no ſinful Averſion to pray againſt; and yet how conſtant a Supplicant? and how importunate? *Heb.* v. 7. That herein he might have Regard to his own Occaſions, was before ſuppoſed; but no Queſtion, he alſo, if not chiefly, deſigned our Inſtruction, and to ſet us an Example, that we ſhould do as he has done; as he ſaith in another Caſe, *John* xiii. 15. Nor are we his Diſciples, unleſs we imitate him in this, as well as other Excellencies, and have ſomething of the ſame Mind in us, that was alſo in him.

7thly, Such is the State and Condition of Chriſtians, their Dependence on God; their Inſufficiency

ency of themſelves, for the Work and Buſineſs of Religion, without Recruits and Supplies from above, that the Plea of Neceſſity in this Caſe is enough to prove the Duty before us, and indeed may ſuperſede all farther Argument. If it be ask'd how I will prove 'tis a Man's Duty to eat, drink, and ſleep? I anſwer, becauſe he cannot otherwiſe live: 'Tis his Duty to preſerve his Life, and theſe are neceſſary Means thereof, and ſo 'tis here. The Exerciſes of Retirement, Meditation, Prayer, *&c.* are the appointed Means of deriving all kind of ſpiritual Supplies from above. Hereby the Chriſtian is ſtrengthened for his Warfare, enabled to encounter and ſtand his Ground againſt his Enemies, *Eph.* vi. 12—18. Hereby he gets his Mind fortified againſt the World, and the Impreſſion of ſenſible Things; his Heart poiſed and ballaſted; his Corruptions ſubdued, and Paſſions kept in ſome *Decorum*; and in a Word, hereby he obtains Aſſiſtance anſwerable to his Occaſions, Grace to help in time of Need. I dare appeal to all ſerious, ſenſible Perſons in the World in this Matter, whether they don't find that Religion proſpers or decays in the Soul, according to their Conſtancy and Diligence in the Duties of the Cloſet; and that while they continue with their Hands lifted up in their Oratory, they prevail againſt their Enemies; but when they are let down, their Enemies prevail, to allude to that *Exod.* xvii. 11. In ſhort, our Graces will languiſh, and Spirits flag, unleſs refreſh'd by conſtant Intercourſe with the great paternal Spirit. Even the Soul of Chriſt, tho' in a State of Innocence and Perfection, had ſo much Feeling of its Dependence, as to ſeek Supports, Supplies and Comfort from his God and Father, by conſtant Devotion. And can we think to be ſafe in the Midſt of ſo many Dan-

Dangers; to be ſucceſsful in Religion, bear up againſt the mighty Oppoſition of our Enemies without, and a dead Weight of Corruption within, in the Neglect of the ſame Means?

In a Word, the Duties I have been recommending, are not only Part of the Homage we owe to God, as his Creatures, but Part of the neceſſary Care we owe to ourſelves: And as we are new Creatures, may be placed among the Principles of Self-preſervation. To neglect them, is to neglect the Means of our Safety and ſpiritual Life; and indeed if the Neglect be total, it argues us deſtitute of Life. A Chriſtian without his Oratory without Converſe with Heaven, is but the Image of a Chriſtian; he is like Man in Arras, a poor, meager, lifeleſs Thing: So that this Argument may be reckon'd concluſive, and I ſhall cloſe the Head with it, that we ought to maintain Intercourſe with God in Retirement, becauſe that is our Strength and our Life.

CHAP. V.

The Concluſion. The Duties of the Oratory recommended, eſpecially to three ſorts of Perſons. Directions and Helps for carrying on the preſcribed Method of Cloſet-Devotion. Some Objections anſwered.

IT is no ſmall Part of my Work that is behind, ſhould I purſue my Intention, *viz.* To ſhew the Excellency and many Advantages of a devout Temper: To direct how to acquire, preſerve and improve it: To take notice of the

chief Impediments of it, with Cautions againſt them. But as I think it neceſſary to put an End to the Diſcourſe as ſoon as poſſible, tho' it be ſomewhat abruptly, I ſhall omit theſe Things, and no farther treſpaſs on the Reader's Patience, only beg Leave to recommend the propoſed Method of Cloſet-Religion very briefly to three ſorts of Perſons eſpecially.

(1) To Miniſters. There is no mean Senſe in the Saying of *Luther*, that three Things make a Miniſter, *Meditation*, *Temptation* and *Prayer*. The more we converſe with God and our own Heart, the fitter we ſhall be for the Duties of our Function: Theſe retired Exerciſes will derive Strength and Ability for publick Performances, and give them another ſort of a Life, than the dry Diſcourſes of common Orators; both the Speaker and Hearer knows this to be true. In ſhort, our Work demands it of us, that we be much in our Oratories; our Comfort, and in a great Meaſure our Succeſs depends upon it. And methinks 'tis no ſmall Admonition to us, that our great Maſter, after he had ſpent the Day in the publick Duties of his Office, preaching, working Miracles, *&c.* ſo often retired, and ſpent the whole, or part of Night in ſecret Devotion: If he needed ſuch Exerciſes, how much more do we? 'Tis indeed the great Advantage of our Profeſſion, that it gives us a Receſs from the World, and ſpecial Opportunity for converſing with God and ſpiritual Subjects; and it exceedingly concerns us to improve it for this Purpoſe, and not ſuffer our Spirits to be too much tinctured of the World, and our Time waſted in worldly Purſuits, Company, Diverſions, *&c.* Miniſters are call'd *Angels*, and ſhould, like them, be always beholding the Face of their Father in Heaven, or miniſtring to Men on Earth.

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'Tis not my Deſign to enlarge here; nor ſhall I take upon me to teach thoſe, of whom I ought and deſire to learn, but I beg leave to ſay, we are very unlike *Men of God*, if we have little Converſe with God. As we ſpeak to Men in the Name of God, we ſhould *come from God*, when we ſpeak to them, if we would be heard.

(2) Another Sort of Perſons to whom eſpecially I would recommend theſe Duties, is the Men of Eſtates and Education, that are free from the Confinements of Trades and Callings. Theſe ordinarily have Time enough at command; and indeed would be at a Loſs, many of them, how to diſpoſe of it, did not their Diverſions and Pleaſures come in to their Aſſiſtance. They have 10 or 12, or more Hours every Day lying upon their Hands, void of any Incumbrance, but what they unneceſſarily bring upon themſelves; and how inexcuſable muſt they be, if they can't find an Hour or two in 24, for the Oratory, for the Affairs of Religion, of their Souls and Eternity? The Plea of *Gentlemen* will ſerve for nothing, but to aggravate the Guilt of their Pride, Sloth, Neglect and Perverſion of Talents. There is a natural Equity in that of our Saviour, *Luke* xii. 48. *To whomſoever much is given, of him ſhall much be required; and to whom Men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.* Theſe Perſons have more Time, Capacity, Helps, and more Opportunity for Religion than others, and therefore ought to attend it the more diligently; and if they do not, their Account at laſt will be but uncomfortable.

(3) The ſame may be ſaid of Perſons of Fullneſs in the World, tho' ingaged in Buſineſs. They have Callings to mind, but the Bounty of Providence has freed them from Drudgery: They don't eat the Bread of Carefulneſs and Sorrow, but have Time enough for neceſſary Buſineſs and neceſſary Devotion.

tion. If they don't find it ſo, the Reaſon is Miſmanagement; they don't rightly divide their Time between this World and the next, allowing to each a due Proportion, but love the World better than their Souls, and therefore for the ſake of the one neglect the other.

I might largely expoſtulate with theſe and the others before mentioned, Men of Subſtance and Eſtate, whether in Callings, or out of them: Conſider God expects more from you; more Time ſpent in Devotions, than from any others. Under the Law Regard was had to the Circumſtances of Perſons in their Sacrifices: Such whoſe Poverty would not allow them a more coſtly offering, might bring Turtles or Pigeons, *Levit.* xii. 8. So 'tis with Reference to our ſpiritual Sacrifices under the Goſpel. They that want Leiſure or Parts, their meaner and ſhorter Services in the Oratory may be effectual to obtain Bleſſings and Comforts, and be accepted of God; but where Perſons have more Time and Ability, better Things are expected from them. God will deſpiſe their corrupt Thing, when they have a Male in the Flock. A Quarter of an Hour may, by the ſpecial Bleſſing of God, to be hoped for in ſuch a Caſe, turn to a better Account with a Servant or poor Labourer, that knows not how to redeem more, than an Hour with thoſe that have their whole Time at their own Diſpoſe.

I might add your Occaſions make theſe Duties exceedingly neceſſary; Riches and Fullneſs adminiſter to Pride and Luxury; betray Perſons into innumerable Temptations; ingage them much in worldly Commerce and Company; all which make Retirement, Recollection and frequent Devotion neceſſary; the Chriſtian, in ſuch Circumſtances, can't be ſafe without it, he will ſoon be off his Baſis and Guard, and loſe his Frame, if he neglect it:

it. I dare appeal for this to all the ſerious Part of Mankind. 'Tis a groſs Miſtake to think Religion and Devotion belongs only to Secluſes, Men ſhut up in Cloiſters, or whoſe Buſineſs is Study and Contemplation: None need it more than *Seculars*, Men of the World, and that are much converſant in the World. Even Chriſt himſelf, when he had been in the World (tho' not about the Affairs of the World) the greateſt Part of the Day, ſaw Occaſion to ſequeſter, and get alone at Night in his Oratory; and can we be ſafe without ſuch divine Auxiliaries? We, who are more expoſed to Temptations, and are leſs able to bear them!

Once more, conſider the main Good of an Eſtate lies in its Subſerviency to the Ends of Religion. There are two Things chiefly that an Eſtate is valuable for, as it gives a Man an Opportunity of being uſeful in the World, rich in good Works, and ſowing more liberally for Eternity, and affords him more Leiſure and Help for Devotion, cultivating his own Mind, converſing with God, and waiting on all the Means and Miniſtries of Religion. If both theſe be neglected, an Eſtate is a Curſe, and not a Bleſſing, and the Owner will wiſh, and wiſh again, that he had ſerved God in Poverty and Rags, rather than have been full and denied him. I know Men of a worldly Spirit and Taſte, that have no higher Principle than Senſe, and judge of all Things from their Convenience to their Appetites, won't come into this; but it is nevertheleſs true for all that, and they will find it ſo at laſt.

Well conſider theſe Things, and attend to your Duty: Whilſt you do ſo, you are ſerving your own Intereſt in the moſt effectual Manner, and improving the Advantage of that Station, and thoſe Circumſtances the Providence of God has

placed you in, otherwiſe your Riches, Plenty and Leiſure is loſt, and will only run into your future Account to enhance your Guilt and Condemnation. To conclude, all of us are more or leſs concerned in theſe Duties, and conſequently in the Exhortation, and ſo I would be underſtood; for tho' I have mention'd ſome Perſons, as having ſpecial Advantages for them, and on that account, more peculiarly obliged to them; yet others, that don't come within theſe diſtinctions, ſhould look upon themſelves concern'd, ſome more than others, but all in ſome Degree, according to their Capacity and Leiſure; but thyſelf render into the Number. 'Tis a good Work I would engage thee in, an honourable and profitable Work; if thou haſt neglected it, neglect it no longer; if thou haſt been inconſtant, partial and defective, confining thy Devotion to one Branch, as Prayer for Inſtance, do ſo no more, but endeavour to extend thy Devotion in the Manner preſcribed. Provide an Oratory, get it ſuitably furniſh'd with ſuch Books as may be helpful, and make the beſt Uſe of them thou canſt: Remember that of the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* xcii. 1, 2. *'Tis a good Thing to give Thanks unto the Lord, and to ſing Praiſe unto thy Name, O moſt High; to ſhew forth thy loving Kindneſs in the Morning, and thy Faithfulneſs every Night.* And again, *Pſal.* lv. 17. *Evening and Morning, and at Noon will I pray, and cry aloud, and he ſhall hear my Voice.* Let your Converſation be in Heaven, in this reſpect; your Traffick and Commerce there; ſuffer no Day to paſs without Intercourſe with God in the Duties of Worſhip; reading the Scripture, Prayer, Meditation, *&c.* and have your Times for the more thorough and ſolemn Diſcharge of theſe Offices, as before adviſed.

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Arguments and Motives, how much ſoever due to the Subject, I can't now make Room for, and therefore ſhall ſhut up all with a few Directions, which I ſhall leave with ſuch as are deſirous to purſue this Scheme and Method of Devotion, and are ſollicitous about a Fitneſs for it.

(1) Endeavour for a Spirit of Devotion; for a Temper and Frame that ſuits Work of this kind; the Foundation of which is laid in Sanctification, or the inward Renewing of our Natures. This is abſolutely neceſſary to the Performance of religious Duties with Succeſs, particularly thoſe of ſolemn Worſhip. Except a Man be born again, born of Water and the Spirit, ſaith Chriſt, he can't enter into the Kingdom of God, *John* iii. 3. 5. *i. e.* as ſome underſtand it, he can't be a Member of the *Meſſiah*'s Kingdom, or of the Chriſtian Church. He is not qualified to diſcharge the Duties, nor partake of the Privileges of it. All the Members of the Church, as I before hinted, are in their ſeveral Degrees Men of Devotion, and accordingly have a new and divine Nature, Principles adopted to Religion; they are not of the World, but choſen and taken out of it; diſtinguiſh'd by another, an higher and more excellent Spirit, which they have received, ſavouring the Things of God, 1 *Cor.* ii. 12. They are Temples of the Holy Ghoſt, conſecrated to Worſhip, and diſpoſed for heavenly Converſe. *God hath ſent forth the Spirit of his Son into their Hearts, crying Abba Father*, Gal. iv. 6. Labour that you may be ſuch true *Church-men*, having the Heart and Temper of the Church, otherwiſe the Duties of ſolemn Worſhip will be your Averſion and Burden; you will be reprobate to them. You may ſometimes be carried to them by external Impulſe and Motives, but wanting the inward Principle, all your Service will have but a

Shadow of Devotion; be unſteady and formal, without Heart and Life. The Hypocrite can't delight himſelf in the Almighty, nor will he always call upon God, *Job* xxvii. 10. I might obſerve beſides this fundamental Requiſite the Truth of Grace in the Heart, ſome Improvement in Grace is alſo neceſſary, and included in the Spirit of Devotion. It notes a Mind happily turn'd this way, bent for Devotion; competent Skill and Ability for the Work; Freedom and Delight in it; an Heart following hard after God, tuned and ſet for this heavenly Employment; that knows how to reliſh the Pleaſures of Worſhip, and triumph therein. Pray for and get ſuch an Heart, and the Buſineſs is done; Arguments and indeed farther Directions will be in a great Meaſure needleſs. If you want ſuch an Heart, beg for it with the utmoſt Importunity, and reſt not till you have obtain'd it. Make great account of a devotional Temper; value the leaſt Improvement of this kind more than all earthly Riches and Honours: And if you thus ſeek the Bleſſing, with this Eſteem and Preference of it, you ſhall not long want it. God will give his holy Spirit to them that in this manner ask it, *Luke* xi. 13.

(2dly,) Accuſtom yourſelves to Retirement, and to ſolemn Converſe with God therein: Not only be patient of it, but endeavour to love it, and delight in it. Guard againſt every Thing that would keep you out of your Oratory! Sloth, Eaſe, Exceſs of worldly Buſineſs, Diverſions, Pleaſures, Company, *&c.* The Converſation of our Friends, that moſt agreeable Enjoyment, muſt be uſed with Caution. *Amici fures Temporis*, ſaith Lord *Bacon*; Friends often rob us of our Time; we ſhould take Care they do not rob us of our beſt Time; the ſacred Hours of Devotion. Frequent Evening Viſits, Games and Clubs muſt be watch'd againſt.

Self-

Self-denial muſt be exerciſed in theſe and other Matters, and an holy Reſolution put on, if we would engage in, and follow the Method of Devotion preſcribed. In ſhort, make ſuch Exerciſes your chief Solace and Comfort, and you will not admit every little Vocation and Excuſe from them. And methinks the Importance and Advantage of the Work ſhould carry in it its own Security; here the Soul trims and decks for Heaven, and wipes off the Sullage it contracts by worldly Converſe, and intermixing ſo much with Things below. Many may join in *Seneca*'s Complaint, "*nun-*
"*quam a turba mores quos extuli refero, aliquid ex*
"*eo quod compoſui turbatur*, &c. I can ſeldom pre-
"ſerve my Manners and Temper in a Crowd of
"Company: I find ſomething or other diſorder'd,
"I had endeavour'd to ſet right. Much Con-
"verſation is hurtful to me." Now in Retirement we recover ourſelves, wind up the depreſſed Mind towards Heaven, and get the Frame rectified again. I mean it gives us an Opportunity of doing this; has this Tendency, and, by the Bleſſing of God, will have this Effect. Innumerable indeed are the Advantages of devout Retirement; endeavour to underſtand what they are, that your Experience may invite you, and your Affections keep you to it; ſo that it may become your Entertainment, and then, no queſtion it will be your Practice.

3dly, Make the Devotion of the Cloſet ſubſervient to an holy Life, a Means of promoting and advancing it, in all the Branches thereof. If your Devotion make you proud, cenſorious, uncharitable, ſour and unſociable; ready to juſtify yourſelves, and deſpiſe others; and to ſay, ſtand by thyſelf, I am holier than thou; much more if you take Encouragement from thence to Acts of In-

juſtice, Fraud, or fleſhly Indulgence; 'tis a falſe Devotion, and looks like the Sacrifice of the Wicked, which is an Abomination to the Lord. The frequent Reviews we make of ourſelves, of our Hearts and Lives in our Cloſets, ſhould be in Order to correct the Irregularities and Indecencies thereof. We converſe with God and ourſelves that we may be better fitted to converſe with others. Our private Cenſures, with the penitential Acknowledgments that accompany them, tend to poliſh and refine us, and ſhew us to the World without Spot, or with fewer Spots; with a Clothing of wrought Gold, ſhining in all the Graces of the divine Spirit; meek, humble, courteous, kind and beneficent; let us endeavour, that it may be ſo with us: *Non eſt vera Religio, quæ cum Templo relinquitur*; Tis not true Religion, ſaith *Lactantius*, which a Man leaves behind him at Church; and the ſame may be ſaid of the Cloſet; true Religion is not confined there, but iſſues forth, and by its Streams refreſhes and adorns the Converſation. The Devotion of the Cloſet ſhould appear in its good Effects in our Conduct out of it; in the conſtant Integrity and Uſefulneſs of our Converſe; I may add, in the Security of our Minds, and Chearfulneſs of our Behaviour. A cloudy Face is far from being the natural Reſult of true Devotion; it rather tends to paint the Countenance with Rays of divine Light and Joy, and give a Luſtre to it that's amiable and inviting, than fill it with frightful Glooms. Certainly none in the World have ſo much Cauſe to be chearful, as holy and devout Men. They that have a good God, and a good Conſcience to converſe with, and are upon good Terms with both, have a continual Feaſt; and no doubt, it becomes them to be merry at it. But I muſt not enlarge here, nor add farther Directions,

nor can I diſtinctly anſwer the Objection ſome may pretend to make againſt this Method of Devotion. I call them pretended, becauſe I reckon them rather Excuſes for Sloth and Diſaffection than real Reaſons, even in the Judgment of the Objectors themſelves.

Some object want of Time; and I before allow'd this would excuſe, when it can truly be pleaded. Not that I ſuppoſe any Chriſtians can want Time for all Devotion, ſo much as a ſhort Prayer; but ſome may want Time for Reading, Meditation, *&c.* and from theſe leſs will be accepted. But how few can, with any Modeſty, join in this Pretence? I leave the Reader to conſult his own Conſcience, and anſwer for himſelf whether he can or not; whether he can't every Day redeem one Hour in 24 for the Oratory, or at leaſt twice a Week, as was propoſed.

Some may object, this is more than needs. A Man may get to Heaven without ſo much ado: But methinks this Pretence ill becomes Chriſtians that profeſs to believe Eternity, and to make Religion their Buſineſs. It ill becomes thoſe that are ſo keen about the World, and ready to run over one another in purſuit of it. 'Tis certain the leſs Religion we have here, the leſs Heaven we ſhall have hereafter, ſuppoſing a lower Degree of it ſufficient to carry us thither: Not to ſay that if we deſire but little Grace, 'tis an Argument we have none at all.

I am aſham'd to mention it as an Objection, though ſome may be found ſo far perverting the Goſpel of Chriſt and Scheme of Chriſtian Religion, as to make it, *that this ſavours of Legaliſm.* We are to be ſaved, ſay they, by believing, and not working; by Chriſt, and in a Way of Free-Grace. If the Meaning be, that Grace ſaves us without ſanctifying

ſanctifying us; that Chriſt was holy and devout in our Stead, and to excuſe us from being ſo; it's downright Enthuſiaſm, and ſubverts the whole Goſpel. We are to be ſaved by Chriſt, it's granted; but he ſaves us *from our Sins*, not *in them* (indulged and allow'd). His Salvation and Grace appears moſt eminently in the Refinement and Perfection of our Minds; the Spirituality and Devotion of our Frames. The more of this any attain to, the more they are indebted to Grace, and the more they will celebrate Grace, both ſanctifying and pardoning Grace. In ſhort, the Goſpel is the higheſt Diſputation of Religion; contains the ſtricteſt Rules, as well as affords the ſtrongeſt Motives and greateſt Encouragements. Chriſt is the moſt ſublime Doctor and Maſter, and his School the higheſt School of Wiſdom and Divine Philoſophy in the World: and to ſay we hope to be ſaved by Chriſt, and thereupon take up with a low groveling State of Religion, is to diſgrace our Profeſſion, and abuſe our Maſter.

To conclude; every thing in our Circumſtances and Caſe, calls us to our *Oratory*. God requires ſuch Work of us, and we need it. Our Maſter has ſet us the moſt illuſtrious Example: Here we have the beſt Company and beſt Employment: This is *Beniel* and *Bethel*, if we behave aright in it; the Houſe of God, and the Gate of Heaven: And tho' we muſt not expect to be transfigured, and ſhine like *Chriſt* on his Mount, or *Moſes* on his; we may hope for thoſe Enjoyments that will make us ſay, *'tis good to be here*, longing at the ſame time to be above.

5 DEC60

FINIS.

AN

ALPHABETICAL INDEX

OF

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